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THE CIVILIZED MAN

THE CIVILIZED MAN

BY

F. McEACHRAN

‘Even the Sun shall not exceed his measures;
for if he does so, the Erinyes, the handmaids
of Dike, will find him out.’—*Heraclitus*.

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CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I THE LEGACY OF THE HISTORICAL PAST	9
II CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE	41
III PHILOSOPHY	79
IV ART	112
V RELIGION	148

I

THE LEGACY OF THE HISTORICAL PAST

So many books have appeared of late with the titles progress, civilization, culture, that the addition of another on a similar topic would seem to need some apology on the part of the author and an assurance that it brings something new to the subject. Yet as it is obvious that no one would write a book without being convinced that he had something to say, a conviction of this kind must be accepted as the author's apology, and judgment on the genuine or spurious character of his conviction deferred to the only possible test, which is the reading of it. The attitude of the author, like that of Anaxagoras in old time, may be described fairly accurately in the sentence: 'All things being together in confusion, reason came and sorted them out,' and although I myself lay no claim to have succeeded in doing the sorting out, I do hope to prove that there is still a confusion and that some sort of sorting out is necessary.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

With regard to my choice of a title, 'The Civilized Man', I am aware that it contains the seed of much controversy and that even its most prominent term 'man' will be subjected to a searching criticism on the part of the naturalist sceptic. Yet the problem of what constitutes man is not really a new problem, nor a very difficult one, and it has only become a thorny problem of late owing to the rise of modern biological science and of a one-sided school of scientific naturalism. To a Hebrew or a Greek, or to a European of the Middle Ages, there was little doubt on the subject, and to their minds man was a quite definite entity. He was distinct from the species of nature by a wide and inseparable gulf, and at the same time linked up in some way, not easily explained, to a being higher than himself, on whom he depended for one part, at least, of his being. He was 'A little lower than the angels' according to one definition of the Hebrew sort, and in Greek phrase, according to a line of Pindar, he was of the same race as Zeus (*ἐν ἀνδρῶν, ἐν θεῶν γένος*). Such quotations are taken at random and will require some qualification as we proceed further, but they will for the moment serve as illustrations. There was, of course, a great difference between the Hebrew and the Greek attitude toward the higher being

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

set above man, and the deep piety of the Hebrews as contrasted with the comparative worldliness of the Greeks has been a subject for comment too often to need mention. But what is the same in both Greek and Hebrew¹ is the ideal of a human being, one and the same everywhere, and together with it three results or conclusions which follow from it: the ideal of man as a being cut off from the lower species of nature, the belief in a power beyond man, and the belief that man to a large extent carves out his own destiny, all of which are really part and parcel of the same underlying belief in the human ideal. The last of these was expressed by Heraclitus in a famous phrase: ἦθος ἀνθρώπου δαίμων (character is the destiny of man), and is practically equivalent to a confession of belief in free will. This, in brief, is what I mean when I speak of 'man', and in spite of the prevailing philosophy of to-day I hope to give some evidence that it is an ideal of humanity which fits in with the facts of human life more completely than any other theory.

Now although the Hebrews and the Greeks

¹ It is true that the Hebrews regarded themselves as a race apart. My point is simply that their writings, when dealing with the human ideal, are as *rein menschlich* (purely human) as the Greek.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

agree on the points I have just mentioned, there is an almost equally important and allied subject on which they are at variance, and this is to be found in their very different attitude towards the development of man in time and to the process known as history. With few exceptions (among which the Epicurean philosophy² is the most important) Greek historical thinkers (and historical thought was, of course, by no means confined to historical works alone) tended towards a belief in world cycles³ and in the repetition, to an infinite number of times, of the events of the historical series. This was true of the Stoics, who believed that the world would periodically end in fire, and it was still more true of the Pythagoreans, 'according to whom', Eudemus said to his disciples, 'I shall

² Epicurean philosophy postulated a plurality of worlds, the evolution of man being a side process in an eternal movement of the atoms. Lucretius in his fifth book describes man as becoming increasingly civilized, but he does not suggest that he is progressing towards anything. In any case, Epicureanism never obtained the popularity of Stoicism.

³ The cyclic theory seems to go back philosophically to Anaximander, in its historical form to Heraclitus. As far as the Greeks are concerned, it was probably derived from Babylonian astronomical speculations. The circling heavens naturally suggest a 'cyclic' history. Alcmaeon pointed out that men died because they could not make their end join their beginning.

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

be telling you the same story once more, holding the same staff in my hand, and you will be seated as you are at present, and all things will happen as before'. Whether the details of a cycle would be repeated in exact similitude was a point left open and undecided (Chrysippus, for example, made an exception for the wart on Dion's face), but repetition, and repetition to infinity there was to be, with the consequent result, unperceived by the Greek, that the value of any single moment as a unique event was inevitably weakened.⁴ The same idea is present in Plato's theory of the Great Year of the world, the cycle in this case lasting 70,000 years. He imagined in his poetical manner that during the first half of this period the Deity kept a firm hand on the wheel of change and that in consequence human affairs passed off in a more or less happy fashion. During the second half, however, when the Deity relaxed His vigilance, conditions went from bad to worse, until at last the inevitable end should come. Now this belief in an end is important, provided only we keep in mind that it is weakened dramatically by the other idea of recurrent ends, and it is striking to notice historically that in

⁴ Origen attacked the theory for the very reason that it weakened moral responsibility.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

actual fact, antiquity did come to an end.⁵ As all antiquity was gathered together in Rome, so with Rome it ended, and after her fall the world began anew. Where the theory broke down was in its inference of recurrence. The old was not repeated and in no wise recurred. What came after was different from what had gone before.

If we turn to the literature of the Greeks we shall find a similar view of life and destiny lying behind their works. The worst and greatest which can happen to man was described by the Greeks in their drama and was commented upon by Aristotle in a manner which was characteristic of the philosophy of eternal return. The doom of Oedipus, of Antigone, of other human ideals of the great Greek age, is something purely human, *rein menschlich*, which could happen to almost any man in almost any age and with which the passage of time has little to do. It does not preach that the world grows older or better,⁶ and it does not aver that its heroes are exceptions to the common run of

⁵ I do not mean that the cyclic theory produced the end. I do mean that philosophical theories affect the minds of men and that the background of cyclic belief in antiquity may have led to fatalism and a weakening of the will in late Roman times. In this sense men get what they want.

⁶ Among the Greeks there was hardly any belief in Progress.

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

men. Rather it fulfils the famous dictum of Aristotle that 'poetry is more philosophical than history'. For poetry, according to the Greeks—and by the word they meant chiefly the drama—isolates the fundamental conditions of human existence and shows them operating in types of character of a worthy but not too worthy kind, leaving the spectator to feel, and to feel intensely, how tragic in its deepest essence human life is. After which it says no more, leaving the spectator to reflect that these things may happen again and again through infinite time, and, strange to say, not in the least depressed because of it. The point of Aristotle's remark lies in the more *purely* 'human character' of poetry as contrasted with history and simply means that poetry deals with 'substance' or 'essentials' stripped of 'accidents', whereas history deals with the particular fortunes of some particular men, who may or may not be typical of humanity as a whole. Poetry gives a picture of what must happen at all times, history of what has happened at one time, the actual example usually given being the life of Alcibiades in Greek history. In Oedipus, and, we might add, in Hamlet too, all men recognize something which they also have experienced, in Alcibiades they do not. It is

THE CIVILIZED MAN

worth while noting that in the most famous example of scientific historical writing among the Greeks,⁷ the Peloponnesian War of Thucydides, the actual facts are tinged with poetry of this kind. In the first place, the author implies that such wars as the one he recounts have happened before and will go on happening, and in the second it is quite unconsciously written, according to one authority at least,⁸ on the model of Greek drama, the Agamemnon of Aeschylus in particular. The downfall of Athens after the Sicilian expedition is seen as the act of Nemesis and as a punishment for the 'Hubris' or overweening pride of the Athenian state. But that such an influence of poetry on history could be felt at all is obviously due to the historical feeling peculiar to the Greeks.

Now to the Hebrew there was no conception of events eternally occurring, but in its stead a very firm belief in the singularity and uniqueness of human history, in the working onwards and upwards of history, especially Hebrew history, to some final event which should be the real and definite end; at first an end in time

⁷ The analogy between the Peloponnesian War and the late War is very close. The difference is that Thucydides did not believe in Progress.

⁸ v. F. M. Cornford, *Thucydides Myth-Historicus*.

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

and on the earth⁹ and then later an event of an apocalyptic kind, occurring suddenly and in a transcendental manner. And just as it is possible to see the relation between Greek thought and Greek literature, so also is it possible to see the Hebrew attitude in Hebrew literature, and it is important at this point to draw attention to it. Even as early as the book of Job, which itself gives a drama of human suffering not dissimilar to that of the Greeks, we find an apocalyptic element developed to quite an extreme degree; and finding its end, moreover, not in the usual Hebrew conception of the reign of a conquering Messiah on earth, but in the world to come and the transcendental realm. This is what Job, in the grip of evil, says: "Though after this skin worms eat my body, yet in my flesh I shall see God." This is itself an advance on the primitive Hebrew idea that after death men 'sleep with their fathers'; and it has points in common both with the Christian conception of the after-life and with the very similar conception formulated by Plato. Two elements in Job are of importance for the future, and both of an historical nature. First, the apocalyptic element just mentioned, whether of this world or the next; and secondly, the feeling that the

⁹ The doctrine of chiliasm or millenarianism.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

event in question has happened once and once only, never again to be repeated. Now it is later in Holy Writ, in the greater drama of the New Testament, in the passion of Christ, that we may perceive the event towards which the world was working, and realize how intensely the historical feeling of the Hebrew race manifested itself therein. For in the Crucifixion of the man-god we have a single and unique event, irrepeatable in history, and agonizing to a profounder depth than the agony of the Greek tragic hero, precisely because of its uniqueness and singularity as an historical event.

Now it is important to notice what elements of the antique 'Weltanschauung' were passed on to the Middle Ages and what elements were rejected, and this we shall do very briefly at this point, by a reference to the work of the writer who is at once the greatest and the purest medieval poet: Dante, and his *Divine Comedy*. We notice that he is still 'antique' in his attitude towards man, holding, no less constantly than the Greeks, that man is the centre of things, and remaining convinced, no less firmly than the Hebrews, that his position is somewhere between the angels and the creatures. He holds fast also to the Greek and Hebrew conception of 'ἦθος ἀνθρώπων δαίμων', and throughout the

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

Divine Comedy, whether in Hell, Purgatory or Heaven, he shows us men who by their strength or weakness of will have made themselves what they are. What is striking, too, is the advantage he has drawn from the Hebrew conception of history¹⁰ and the added intensity of tragic feeling which the Hebrew 'singularity' has enabled him to breathe into his human beings, hardly less than that of the passion of Christ to which allusion has already been made. Lastly, he is inspired by the Hebrew belief in a unique end, and in this belief, moreover, in its transcendental form. For, as in nearly all medieval writers (including even such an advanced thinker as Roger Bacon), the end of the world is very near in Dante, and his Paradise, vast as it is, has but few seats remaining to be filled.

'Ecco le schiere
Del trionfo di Cristo e tutto il frutto
Ricolto del girar di queste spere.'¹¹

The medieval outlook on the world which Dante preserves for us, with its background of a 'closed universe' of the Ptolemaic kind, was substantially the outlook of the Roman Church, and apart from the necessary qualifications

¹⁰ v. Erich Auerbach, *Dante als Dichter der irdischen Welt*.

¹¹ Behold the hosts of Christ's triumph, and all the fruit gathered by the circling of these spheres. Par. xxiii. 19.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

which Copernican and later discoveries involve on the material side, still remains so to-day. We can even go further than this and urge that in the form we have given it and in its presentation of the human individual it is still substantially correct. For the time being, however, we confine ourselves in the following pages to a brief review of the shifting of attitude in human matters during the centuries which have passed since Dante's day, and which in particular has given rise to the widespread belief in human progress prevalent at the present time in the American and European world.

It must be remembered that the period which not very accurately goes by the name of the Renaissance, and which is generally regarded as an outburst of human individualism in reaction against the corporate religious society of the Middle Ages, none the less preserved in great measure the human centrality and the human ideal of which we have spoken; and in its actual artistic production, whether in drama or in painting or statuary, showed a similar attitude to that of Dante, with of course the qualification that human life for its own sake is even more strongly emphasized. We need only recall the tragic heroes of Shakespeare or such a figure as the magnificent Adam of the Sistine

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

Chapel (itself a synthesis of Greek and Hebrew humanity) to realize the truth of this statement. Yet it must also be borne in mind that most of our modern movements in one way or another go back to the Renaissance;¹² and to state barely that human centrality was preserved does not altogether cover the actual facts of the case. This was true particularly of that aspect of the Renaissance which derived its inspiration from purely Greek and classical sources; but there also occurred as part of the Renaissance the religious movement known as the Reformation, which was in many respects a movement away from the human centrality of antiquity and of the Middle Ages, and was a forecast of what we call nationalism to-day. For the northern nations of Europe, unlike those of the south, were less in intimate rapport with the Greco-Roman past, and it was not unnatural that in their desire for individual self-expression they should turn more to the intensely individualistic Hebrew Old Testament than to the Hellenized Judaism of the New—especially in view of the fact that the aesthetic tradition which goes back to Greece had never struck its roots deeply on their soil. And so with the fading of the power

¹² And of course further back. The influence of medieval thought on Descartes, Leibniz, etc., was very great.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

of the Church Universal in the north of Europe and the practical disappearance of the Medieval Empire, the modern feeling of nationality in its nascent religious form came into being.

Now if the religious reformation of the sixteenth century was itself the first movement away from the antique universalism, we may add that the second was the naturalistic outburst of the second half of the eighteenth century, led by Rousseau and his followers, in reaction to something which had come between. This something was the Cartesian rationalism and was itself, no less than Protestantism, a product of the many-sided individualism of the Renaissance, so true it is that the various actions and reactions which have occurred since that epoch all derive from a common source. For one of the more successful activities of the Renaissance had been the development, in connection with Pythagorean mathematics, of mathematical knowledge far in advance of any other branch of science, and as a natural consequence the growth of the Cartesian philosophy with its emphasis on clear and distinct ideas as the hall-mark of truth. And although Descartes, in his *Discours de la Méthode* and with his celebrated dictum '*cogito ergo sum*', was individualistic in the sense that he imagined he

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

was beginning again from the beginning and making a clean sweep of the past, he was still universal and even humanistic in keeping man at the centre of interest, and in his belief in a sort of ideal 'reasonable man' who could solve all problems of the universe by the unlimited use of his reasoning powers. In point of fact, this outlook on human life did establish itself for the next two centuries, the seventeenth and eighteenth, and Europe as a whole was only too glad to enjoy a little 'reasonableness' after the excesses of the religious Reformation, and was prepared even to model its literature and its social life on clear and distinct reasonable lines. Yet it was perhaps inevitable that a philosophy which despised and contemned anything which could not be reduced to clear ideas, such as certain elements in art and literature, should bear within itself the seeds of its own destruction and lead by its own supremacy to its downfall. As the course of events was to prove, even during the period of its own supremacy, a stream of thought also deriving from the Renaissance was preparing the way for a reaction against Cartesianism in a country where rationalism has never been at home.

This was the philosophy of Francis Bacon, himself a product of the Renaissance and in

THE CIVILIZED MAN

certain directions even more so than Descartes, as, for example, in his enthusiasm for the literary achievements of antiquity. But where Bacon was original, and where his influence has been most deeply felt, was in his rejection of the Aristotelian teleological science in favour of the atomism of Leucippus and Democritus, and in his advocacy of scientific experiment and the empirical method in general instead of the deductive method, which explained nature by means of final causes.

For without any of the qualifications either of logic or insight which go to produce a great philosopher, Bacon is second to none in his influence on the modern world, and his inductive method, carrying in its train the desire of man to subdue nature for his own ends, and with its marvellous success in the scientific world, has coloured to a considerable extent the modern attitude towards life. In the meantime we have to note that it was furthered on the psychological side by the English philosophers Locke and Hume in the eighteenth century, and that their interest in the psychological processes of the human mind, combined with an implicit¹³ confidence in the reality of

¹³ Hume was sceptical about knowledge, but he posited a sort of faith in the external world.

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

the material world, finally united with the stream of emotional naturalism started by Rousseau to produce the movement known as Romanticism in the nineteenth century. In this movement, which was largely a reaction from the rational Cartesian contempt of natural and 'illogical' things, the things of nature, trees, birds, flowers, occupy a position not merely in the background as in former periods, but, to the consequent displacement of man, in the foreground of interest. In Dante,¹⁴ as well as in Greek and Hebrew literature, the 'natural' as distinct from the 'human' creation is dealt with very often in a most beautiful manner, but subordinate always to the thoughts and ideals of men. The ancients did not sing of a skylark in the manner of a Shelley, nor of a lesser Celandine in the manner of a Wordsworth, and their paintings, unlike the landscapes of a Constable, always have in the centre, to add dignity to the whole, a figure which is human. The pathetic fallacy of Ruskin, whereby man allows his own subjective feelings to overflow into nature, was rarely indulged in by them and only in their more decadent days. In the Romantic reaction we are dangerously near the identification of

¹⁴ Attempts to romanticize Dante have all signally failed. v. Karl Vossler, *Medieval Culture*,

THE CIVILIZED MAN

man with nature, and the result of Romantic methods in this respect can be studied in the literature of the period. A typical example is the drama of Shelley, *Prometheus Bound*, where man is looked upon as naturally endowed with all the virtues, and any form of superior restraining power over him which in any way circumscribes or suppresses the exercise of his natural faculties, is regarded *ex hypothesi* as bad. So Prometheus, who defies omnipotence, is good in Shelley because he is a child of nature, just as a vernal wood or a bubbling spring is good, and anything which opposes him and his natural goodness, whether priest, king, or the deity himself, is painted as black as night.

Together with the Romantic movement in literature we must consider the new historical outlook which arose on German soil and which shows similar tendencies to those we see in poetry. In order to appreciate this we must retrace our steps a little and consider the fate of the Hebrew conception of history and of the apocalyptic end which was the vision of the Middle Ages. In the first place the Renaissance, in spite of the emphasis which its leading representatives had laid on purely human ends and ideals, still preserved to a considerable extent the belief that man's final aim was trans-

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

cidental, and together with this belief a conviction that history, as it were, did not 'progress' to any extent worth mentioning. The immediate aim, in fact, of the men of the age was to regain what had, as they thought, been lost during the Middle Ages, and it would not be untrue to say that they entertained the belief prevalent in the early Middle Ages that the great days of mankind lay in the past, and were on occasion even ready to believe, like the Greeks, that if any movement in history took place, it was probably for the worse.¹⁵ At the end of the seventeenth century we find Sir Thomas Browne reflecting, like a medieval writer, that the world is old and may soon cease to be: 'I believe that the world grows near its end.' His point of view, indeed, is not different from that of the medievals, believing like them that a temporal end is approaching, and that the real end, over and above the temporal, is apocalyptic in the supernatural sense. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, opinion was changing and the reason was that in the meantime, under the influence of Descartes on the one hand, with his egocentric rationalism, and of Bacon on the other hand, with his summons to man to organize nature to his ends (*commodis*

¹⁵ For the Greek, time was the enemy.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

humanis inservire), modern man had become conscious of himself and his own possibilities. Because in literature and philosophy men seemed to have equalled and even outstripped the ancients, the only problem left to discuss was that of going further than they had gone, and, moreover, of going further not only in artistic things. This is the importance of the philosophical outlook lying behind the somewhat petty *Querelle des Ancients et des Modernes*, and the consequent birth of a belief, undefined but nevertheless real, in human progress to 'better' things. Its first expression, chiefly on rational lines, was an outcome of the mathematical interests and Cartesian background of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and its principal representatives were men of keen logical minds such as Fontenelle, Turgot and Condorcet, and the French '*philosophes*' in general. They still believed that man was one, and in so far preserved the universal human point of view; but they believed also that he was logical and intelligent through and through, and that if invited to construct a rational society organized to bring about the happiness of all men, he would be ready and able to do it. Secondly, without being aware of it, they were inspired by the Hebrew apocalyptic idea in a

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

new and peculiar form, believing not only that an intellectual Messiah was at hand who would make all things new, but that he would do it not in the next world but in this. In the fanaticism of this belief they were quite as credulous as the religion they attacked (*Écrasez l'infâme* was the war-cry of one of them), and, as Professor Whitehead has said concerning them,¹⁶ their belief in the 'rationality' of the universe is only the medieval 'faith' in a new form. The irrational element which, for example, the Hebrew writer of Job saw behind the universe, and which the Greeks mirrored in their tragic drama, was non-existent for them—or at least would disappear as soon as reason was given a free hand. Now as it happened, they had their apocalypse in the French Revolution, their Messiah in Napoleon, and the belief in reason which had buoyed them up for half a century vanished, for one generation at least, in the smoke of the guns of the Messiah.

The historical reaction which is the parallel to Romanticism was already appearing in Germany in the second half of the eighteenth century and deserves special attention at this point. It first manifested itself as a reaction against the easy satisfaction of the rationalist

¹⁶ In *Science and the Modern World*.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

philosophy of the age and the prevailing contempt of the kind expressed by Voltaire and Gibbon for the Middle Ages, and it turned after the manner of Rousseau to the 'natural' man for spiritual relief, the 'natural man' being in this case the primitive ages of man in general and the Middle Ages in particular. It began by being universal in its outlook, just as the eighteenth century had been universal; but instead of a universalism based on the Cartesian reason, there was now conceived a universalism based on feeling, aiming in the first place at restoring the rights of such ages as the eighteenth century had despised as 'irrational'. The reaction began very naturally by pouring praise on a new European past, the past of the northern nations, and by finding in that past, which the Germans regarded as typically their own,¹⁷ all sorts of virtues which more civilized ages did not possess, such as vigour, spontaneity, strength, and so forth. As, however, on closer examination it was difficult to find a great degree of universality in the confusion of the primitive past, the movement very soon became

¹⁷ This belief is part and parcel of the old idea that the Germanic tribes let light into an effete Roman Empire, and that the Middle Ages were 'their' ages. Fustel de Coulanges was one of the first to criticize the soundness of this view.

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

a movement towards national rather than international origins, and encouraged the formation of a spirit of nationality in modern Europe strangely opposed to the solidarity of feeling of which even the Renaissance had given evidence.¹⁸ Moreover, as outstanding individuals were not to be found among the primitive races, except in odd cases of men who were more 'civilized'¹⁹ than their fellows, it was natural that emphasis should tend to be laid on groups rather than on individuals and the doctrine be evolved of the 'collective soul',²⁰ with the accompanying belief that nations have their own peculiar ways of expressing themselves totally different one from another, and with no common human centre to which they might develop. This was a movement in opposition both to the Greek universality and the Greek human ideal, and its net result was to deny the fundamental unity of the human ideal, to place history in a state of flux and to isolate the nations culturally from each other, leaving them consequently to develop theories and philosophies in defence of their own peculiarities.

¹⁸ i.e. the feeling of a common and 'classical' past.

¹⁹ Who would hardly have fitted in with the 'primitive' theory.

²⁰ Herder was largely responsible for this.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

After the religious movement and the Romantic movement, the third movement away from the purely human was that inaugurated by Lamarck, Darwin and the biological evolutionists, by virtue of which man at last, scientifically and definitely, found himself placed on a *pied d'égalité* with the creatures which perish, and the thesis was established that the forms of life, in all their manifestations, have developed from a common source. In point of fact, this theory only dealt with the physical aspect of life and did not necessarily affect man on the moral and aesthetic side at all, but it was taken at first to include all aspects of human life. This it could do all the more easily on account of the idea of progress which was still spreading and which, although it had been shaken on the rational side for the time being by the French Revolution, could quite easily fit in with the new biological theories, and still more easily fuse with the new theory of 'national' history which had arisen in Germany. The combination led to the conception of human life as a struggle between nations on military and commercial lines comparable to the 'survival of the fittest' of the biologists, and it found on the whole its ablest exponents among the Germans, where the

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

collective soul and the apotheosis of feeling had first been fused together into a systematic philosophy.

To take up the history of the idea of Progress where we left it in the eighteenth century, we must again retrace our steps a little, and give some indication of the march of science in the nineteenth century and the features in which it differed from that of the eighteenth. We must remember that the nineteenth century was by no means so engrossed with mathematics as the eighteenth had been, and that in the course of time new sciences had developed, such as chemistry and the elements of biology and geology, with the result that among thinking people even before 1800 the idea of an approaching end of the world was receding into the limitless vista of the future.²¹ This long vista could not but give a fillip to the hopes of the followers of Bacon and to those who desired like Bacon '*Commodis humanis inservire*', and who with their motto 'knowledge is power' would chain the forces of nature to the service and betterment of mankind. And even as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had

²¹ And yet the unlimited 'vista' has not had any appreciable effect on man's outlook. The leaders of the French Revolution and of the late Russian Revolution believed 'apocalyptically' in a 'good time', coming *at once*, not after many years.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

equalled and even surpassed antiquity, as some maintained, in their literary productions (out of which opinion arose the *Querelle des Ancients et des Modernes* already mentioned), so now Baconian science was discovering ever more things which Caesar never knew, and the supremacy of the modern world seemed to have found its guarantee. And with the disintegration of the Cartesian belief in reason, Progress began now to be regarded as a practical and sociological rather than an intellectual and rational problem, and in the philosophy of Auguste Comte, the apostle of positivism (who was strongly influenced by German thought), the future of mankind, collectively considered, became one of organization to practical utilitarian ends. The new ideas, moreover, found a suitable material for their propagation in the hard-working, thrifty Protestants of England,²² and in their Puritan conviction that God would not allow the work of the good man not to prosper. And prosper it did, hand in glove with Baconianism, and it was in England first and then in America and Germany (i.e. among Protestant peoples mainly) that the Industrial Revolution developed, only later to find acceptance among the older, Catholic, groups. Even to-day it is in

²² Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*.

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

the Middle West of America that the combination of godliness and big business finds its superlative expression, and it is the Middle West which is the last happy hunting-ground of the Puritans of America. Involuntarily they learned to construe the promise of future bliss and happiness into a promise valid for this world rather than the next, and in agreement with, or rather under, the influence of their Baconian instructors, they turned away from the transcendental belief to a belief in the immediacy of paradise and of a land flowing with milk and honey, with nature harnessed to the service not so much of God as of man. A whole series of writers following on Comte and his successors, with Karl Marx as their leader, worked out this new belief in human destiny into a definite system and, without being conscious of plagiarism, were sufficiently inspired by the old Hebrew apocalypse to believe that the world could be renewed by the magician's wand of the Messiah, and all things begin again. We have already seen something of this belief in the eighteenth century rationalism, and as a result of the influence of Marx²³ it has again arisen in a sociological form in the Russia of Lenin. Yet neither the philosophers

²³ With an Hegelian historical background.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

of the pre-Napoleon epoch nor the Bolsheviks of to-day seem to be aware that the source of their belief is in the very book they affect to despise and in the religion which they rejected.

As an outcome of these brief notes on the history of the past the following points may be specially emphasized. In the first place it is evident that man has ceased to be regarded as the centre of creation and has been placed, as a result of the science of the nineteenth century, very nearly, if not quite, on a level with the animals. Secondly, that while we have retained the Hebrew belief in the singularity of history, we have transformed its meaning fundamentally by substituting an earthly kingdom in time for a heavenly, and in time which is not too far off (a good time coming),²⁴ and have accordingly tacitly accepted the consequences that such a substitution involves. To make quite plain what it does involve we cannot do better than turn once more to Sir Thomas Browne and listen to his words on this subject. More than most people, he makes clear the difference in spirit between humanism of the Greek, and still more of the Hebrew kind, and the humani-

²⁴ Modern Utopias are placed in the *not too distant* future. Ancient Utopias were placed in the past. The modern view is a result of the idea of Progress.

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

tarianism which, in Baconian wise, would transform the world into a paradise for man.

‘I give no alms only to satisfy the hunger of my brother, but to fulfil and accomplish the Will and Command of my God; I draw not my purse for his sake that demands it, but His that enjoined it; I relieve no man upon the Rhetorick of his miseries, nor to content mine own commiserating disposition.’²⁵ This is in fact the very point at issue and discloses in one phrase the weakness of the modern position. The deep sense of service towards a higher being, which is so strong in Hebrew thought and which is implicit to the Greek view of life, has disappeared in modern philosophy, and the end of life is conceived in terms of another and unsound form of service. Instead of the service of God to which we arduously rise and which raises us above the ‘rhetorick of human miseries’, service is to ourselves and to one another, not one whit higher, philosophically considered, than the instinctive service of a wolf to his pack,²⁶ and because it is based on feeling, the feeling of pity, as ‘natural’ an impulse as

²⁵ *Religio Medici*. Second Part.

²⁶ True service must contain an element of ‘humility’ as its essential basis. A man who is raising the level of his own character is doing ‘service’ more than the ‘uplifter’.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

any other emotion, and, we may add, liable to turn very quickly into other emotions less pleasant than pity. And linked up with this conception of service is the Baconian doctrine of power, so that a new war-cry as deadly as any that have deafened the ears of man has made itself heard in the world in the 'power and service' of the modern humanitarian, leaving us at the mercy of the Lenins and Mussolinis who would serve humanity by compelling it to submit to their will. For the older and more glorious device '*ad majorem gloriam Dei*' we have put 'in the name of public welfare and progress', and by so doing have exposed ourselves and our civilization to catastrophe after catastrophe without even, when ruin comes, the consolation of a true idealism to stand us by.

It may be objected that this rather cursory account of the progress of human events is too limited in time and in space to be adequate for drawing generalizations of so wide and important a kind as those which I have made and intend to make later on the subject of man. I have not included the archaic ritual civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, nor the civilizations of the Far East and of India, nor considered the countless ages which, according to modern geology, have

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

preceded the history of mankind on this planet, and which it may be thought are necessary in order to take what is frequently called a 'broad view' of human events. The answer to the spatial argument (e.g. the experience of the the Far East, etc.) may be relegated to a later chapter, but the argument drawn from geological epochs can quite well be considered here and at once. The answer is that time does not matter until man becomes conscious of it, and that since it is the men of the last two or three thousand years, in the West at least, who have invented the very terminology which gives time a meaning, whether in solar years or geological epochs—who alone are able to appreciate what these terms mean—the proper broad view is not obtained by considering the opinion of primeval creatures such as the pterodactyl, but by collecting and comparing the opinions of men in historical times and in the times when men have been men and not anthropoid or other apes. I admit that if the human race had been in an advanced stage of development for the length even of one geological epoch, then a broad view would have to go back just so far and no farther. But as it is, a period of two or three thousand years will not only suffice, but is positively the only possible

THE CIVILIZED MAN

length of time which it is permissible to take. The reason which causes me to allege this will become more evident when the terms civilized and cultured are defined in the next chapter. For the moment it must suffice that I have given a meaning to the term human and have shown how far we are from the attitude of previous ages in this respect.

II

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

THE use of the word civilized in its Anglo-Saxon connotation needs a little careful definition on the side of its relation to the other term 'culture' which Matthew Arnold so valiantly tried to popularize in Victorian times. The situation is complicated, moreover, by the fact that in Central Europe both words have already been carefully defined and each relegated to their special departments: 'civilization' being used to denote all that the worship of Baconianism has produced, including such articles as railways, telegraphs, *le confort moderne*, sanitation, etc., while the term 'culture' or 'Kultur', which, incidentally, is derived from Bacon (*cultura animi*), is used for precisely the same idea which Matthew Arnold gave to it in English and which he probably derived from German sources, the graces and accomplishments of the mind. Now most unfortunately for us—partly as a result of a reaction against Matthew Arnold, Ruskin and the Victorian age in general—cul-

THE CIVILIZED MAN

ture has come to have an objectionably high-brow resonance, while any influence that might have come from the German Kultur has been vitiated by the rancour of the Great War. As conditions are at present, the term civilization in England and America, and in Anglo-Saxon countries in general, is used to mean both Kultur and civilization, and between the two concepts no distinction is made in modern English speech. In fact, as a result of our very strong Baconian tradition (in America still stronger), the belief is prevalent amongst us that culture arises out of civilization, and that a love and appreciation of the fine arts will inevitably follow on the development of railways, telegraphs, wireless, and newspapers. By the same logic (which is itself one result of the belief in Progress) the idea is abroad that improved sanitation, in the teeth of historical fact, as seen in Athens, Florence, or Paris, will produce a harvest of poets and artists. A well-known writer, Mr. Clive Bell, has lately written a book entitled *Civilization*, in which quite often the term civilization really means culture, and in which it is only too evident that the Anglo-Saxon use of the word to cover two different ideas is largely to blame. Mr. Clive Bell is, of course, quite aware of the difference, and he no doubt uses the

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

word because he was forced to do so and because no one in England who values his reputation would dare to use the word culture.

Yet for the sake of argument I intend to use both words—culture and civilization—and to use them deliberately for my own ends. Culture I shall use for an epoch which can be called creative in ‘works’, and ‘civilized’ as a term for the men who take part in creation and who appreciate the creative work which has been produced. ‘Culture’ will therefore be an historical term applied to epochs, and ‘civilized’ a term of a moral or aesthetic kind applied to the human beings who live during the culture epochs, a system of nomenclature which obviates the unfortunate sense of culture when applied to men. This terminology differs somewhat from that adopted by Mr. Clive Bell, as it differs also from that adopted by the German writer, Oswald Spengler,¹ and it is obvious that it differs most of all from the current use of civilized in its Baconian sense. Mr. Clive Bell applies both words to epochs and is inclined to regard creative epochs, such as those of the Elizabethans and of the fifth-century Greeks, as less ‘civilized’ than the more imitative epochs, such as the eighteenth century

¹ ‘Der Untergang des Abendlandes’, an Hegelian work denying human freedom of will.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

and the Hellenistic age. He is inclined to restrict the word 'civilized' to mean only 'refined taste' and ignores therefore any meaning outside the purely aesthetic. Herr Oswald Spengler likewise applies both words to epochs, but adopts the Germanic nomenclature in using culture for the creative epochs of genius occurring in a race in its halcyon days of artistic production and civilization for the mechanization which followed in the Roman Empire in antiquity and in the present age of 'Americanization' in Europe. The difficulty of both these classifications is that they draw a hard and fast line between epochs of creative work and epochs of imitation, which historical fact does not in reality allow to be drawn. Men of creative capacity occur sporadically even in the most 'mechanized' eras, and the examples of Newton, Goethe and Einstein, to quote only two examples in the last two centuries, would suffice to prove that creative genius of the highest kind exists even in so-called mechanized eras and that temporal distinctions of the kind really cannot be made. I shall therefore run the two words together and, as indicated, apply one to the epoch and the other to the men who live in it, with what are more or less obvious advantages.

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

Now as regards the culture epochs of the past and the periods when civilized men can be said to have existed, the only possible means of approach is the scientific method of comparison and classification, and the first and principal means is the comparison and contrast of men of the past with ourselves. It may seem at the outset that this is a form of anthropomorphic conceit, and that to measure the past by our own present is a subjective and relativistic attitude which no scientific method could justify. Yet it is obvious that it is the only method possible, and that if we deny our own selves as a standard we can get no further and may as well at once give up the task of investigation. The truth is that we are forced to begin with ourselves, and are compelled to look in the past for something like ourselves as the first object of our search. Not till we begin passing judgment on the past, for good or ill, does the question of conceit or its opposite arise, and, as I shall try to prove, there is a possible method which is adequate to guard against both these evils.

The problem is to find in the flux of the past some centre from which to judge it, and a centre which will not merely be suitable for the past but also for the present and for the future. It is to review the past, not too superficially lest the

THE CIVILIZED MAN

surface be only grazed, nor yet too much in detail lest a true vision be obscured, but precisely to the extent that will enable us to see the sameness beneath the difference and the 'one' which remains behind the 'many' of historical phenomena.

The method proposed is a 'human' method in the sense that it proposes to take into account primarily the human aspect of the past. It does not take into account the biological or geological record of the early days of this planet, nor does it consider the habits or demeanour of our ape-like ancestors. It does not even take into account the customs of the Neanderthal man, nor of any species of man or semi-man which cannot conclusively prove its right to be human on arguments not solely drawn from the shape and size of its skull. The method consists in tracing back through the centuries the 'works', artistic and literary above all, of what are undoubtedly complete human beings, and examining in such 'works' rather what shows a sameness with other human beings than what shows a difference. The production of such works is to be taken as a proof of humanity as distinct from proofs which are drawn from skulls or other bones, and the nearer such works of art are to the common run of human productions, the

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

more human the men who produced them will be taken to be. Just so far back as this human sameness may be traced can human beings be said to have existed. Further back than this humanity in any sense of the word may or may not have existed, and even if it existed the lack of 'works' renders the task of speculating about it of no avail, and no amount of argument drawn from bones or ossuaries will really prove anything which is of value. I do not claim that my own arguments are by any means final, but I do claim that what I mean by the term 'human being' is something not unlike myself and the men of to-day, and in which they and I would recognize a fellow human creature. 'Human being' is, in fact, any sort of creature with which, in short, I can, by means of speech, art, or literature, come into intimate and human contact. Whether I should be able to do this in the case of the cave men, I am rather doubtful, and I think I could hardly do it with the Neanderthal man, I am quite sure, however, that I should find no difficulty in communing to a limited extent with the Babylonians, Assyrians and ancient Egyptians. I am sure, also, that I could achieve human contact to an unlimited extent with the Greeks, Romans, medieval Europeans and Renaissance Italians, the Chinese of

THE CIVILIZED MAN

Confucius' age, the Elizabethans and the French of the age of Louis XIV. This is the elementary form of the method, but it goes further than this. To be civilized in the sense I attribute to the word, is not merely to recognize men when we meet them, and not to confuse them with anthropoid apes, but also to see which are better and which are worse men, which are further and which are nearer to the ideal man which can only be perceived by insight; to have, in short, a sense of values in the sphere of the human product. It is by means of this sense of values that we are able to distinguish in the past epochs of barbarism from epochs of culture, and civilized men from less civilized, and to feel to some extent in what relation we stand to each of these. And although we must perforce start with ourselves and work backwards, this does not mean that we set up ourselves as a standard, but rather that in the whole series of men under review we observe those who for the longest time, and with the least hesitation, have been regarded as the best in all ages and climes, and, by working on this basis, attain the vision of an ideal man with whom to compare ourselves. Now it is at this point, and it is an important point, that we come to grips with the theory of evolution in so far as that theory attempts to explain man as he

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

is known in historical times wholly from what went before. This is no attempt to deny evolution on the physical side, or to maintain a theory of special creation, but simply a refusal to admit that all the qualities of man are to be explained by the animal part of him and by the part which evolution seems to explain.² Somewhere in the past, and I frankly admit that I do not know where (although I think I know whereabouts), there arose on this planet a creature possessing a dualism of nature which other creatures do not possess, and which is still apparent to-day. Looking back from man as he appears now, it is possible to trace this dualism for several thousand years with comparative ease, before which time the extreme lack of human 'works' render research difficult. Occasionally, in what are called culture epochs, peopled by what I have called civilized men, it manifests itself with peculiar force and magnificent results, at other times with less force and less important results; but always where there are civilized men there are his works also, and it is by the dualism present in these works, rather than by the shape of their skulls, that we know that their creators

² Professor Hans Driesch, 'Ethical Principles'. 'I think that men have always been essentially the same, so long at least a phylogenetically they were men.'

THE CIVILIZED MAN

were men. Precisely here, in truth, lies the dualism. Nature gave man his skull, man created works, but the skulls, in spite of modern science, do not explain the works.

This dualism will be examined more carefully in later chapters under its threefold form of philosophy, art and religion, and little more will therefore be said about it here. A few words will, however, not be wasted in illustrating from the past in brief outline what civilized men and their works are, and in exemplifying the elements which these have in common. For the sake of brevity, and also because of their greater familiarity, most illustrations will be drawn from European or Mediterranean sources, although they might just as easily be drawn from the Far East and from India. One whole class of culture period, the ritual cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Central America, will be largely ignored, not because they do not contain much that is apposite to the argument, but because the civilized men who were their originators and creators have been obscured by the mist of the past, and such information as we possess about them chiefly concerns the period when these cultures had hardened into a rigid formalism. The men we call civilized are free individuals living in a more or less free atmosphere, and

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

capable, because of this freedom they possess, of building up a civilized state. Because they are to some extent free they can make the distinction which is peculiarly human between what is the ideal of truth, scientific or otherwise, and what 'ought to be', the ideal of the will and of human ethics. These distinctions correspond to the dualism we have just briefly mentioned, by virtue of which free men do not regard the truth of nature as necessarily right, but seek for themselves, often against nature, something which they hold to be still more right, which itself is the mark of their civilization.

The best examples of the kind of men we mean are still to be found among the Greeks of antiquity, and in their works we still find the masterpieces of the human spirit. Whether in literature, in sculpture, or other arts, they were remarkable for the gift of seeing the complete human and in representing it in a way which was to be imperishable and a source of inspiration to future times. In their works man was at the centre, and the thoughts and ideals of men clearly portrayed. Conscious of the beauty of physical nature, and often keenly scientific in their attitude towards it, they by no means allowed these interests to overshadow the interest which is greater than all, and wherever we

THE CIVILIZED MAN

turn in contemplating Greek productions, we meet always the figure of man, rendered, moreover, in such a manner as to illustrate perfectly the dualism of which we speak. In Greek sculpture man is not represented as he is, and as nature made him, but as the Greek thought he ought to be, and the result, presumptuous as it may seem to those who glorify nature and its processes, is something more attractive to the eye which contemplates. In the epic, and better still in the tragic drama, which was held to be the highest branch of literature, the same method was adopted, and we have in the tragic drama of the Greeks the same striking dualism of outlook with the added energy and life which drama affords. By this I mean that, just as in statuary the human being is represented as a creation above nature, so in drama the hero who collapses is represented on a plane which is higher than nature. As an example I will take the Trojan Women of Euripides and try to isolate in its action the human qualities which make up its dual nature. This play was written by the poet in the full turmoil and horror of the Peloponnesian War, and probably as an echo of the massacre of the island Melians by the Athenians. The drama deals with the sack of Troy, and its chief heroine is Hecuba, wife of

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

Priam the King. Its plot is simple, showing how Hecuba, after her city is fallen, sees her daughters handed over to the Greeks as concubines, and worst and last of all, her grandson, Astyanax, thrown to his death from its battlements. Now what must be stressed here is the attitude of Hecuba in face of this ruin and her human reaction to it. By the law of nature she ought either to howl in anguish, if her instincts are weak and she is easily moved, or if strong, to burst into invective against her pitiless enemies and against whatever righteousness she had hitherto believed in. Both of these reactions would have been perfectly natural and have often occurred in human history. But she, doing neither of these, illustrates by her action the very point we are emphasizing, the dual outlook of civilized people in the universe. On the one hand, the plain truth of nature, human instincts, anger, ruthlessness, desire for plunder, and a horde of men who have ceased to control themselves; on the other, a belief in Hecuba's mind that over this series of events there is another series, the series of what ought to be, which no bestiality of men can crush, and which has its own reality no less than theirs. So we find her pronouncing the marvellous lines:

THE CIVILIZED MAN

ὦ γῆς ὄχημα, καὶ γῆς ἔχων ἔδραν
 ὅστις ποτ' εἶ σύ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι
 Ζεὺς, εἴτ' ἀνάγκη φύσεος, εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν,
 προσηυξάμεν σε· πάντα γὰρ δι' ἀπόφου
 βαίνων κελεύθου, κατὰ δίκην τὰ θνήτ' ἄγεις :³

and asserting, in the teeth of ruin, the human outlook on the universe. Not only in Hecuba, but in many other Greek figures we could find examples of this. In Oedipus, of whom we shall speak later, the same truth is vindicated, and again, in the story of Antigone. The actual life of Oedipus is one series of events, the series of truth or of science, if we will, but in Oedipus' mind there is the vision of another, the series of what ought to but has not been, and between the two a cleft. His series included a stainless life and the avoidance of two unethical events, whereas the actual series involved the killing of his father and marriage with his mother. The first was his human ideal, the second was what nature made him do, yet he does not accept nature's verdict. So, also, Antigone in a rather more complicated situation where two ethical

³ Euripides. *Daughters of Troy*, 884.

'O Earth's Upbearer, thou whose throne is Earth
 Whoe'er thou be, O past our finding out,
 Zeus, be thou Nature's Law or Mind of Man
 Thee I invoke; for treading soundless paths,
 To Justice' goal thou bring'st all mortal things.'

A. S. Way's translation (Loeb).

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

lines cross. In this play there is no question of nature itself but of a higher and a lower ethical ideal, that of Antigone and that of the state of Thebes. In the face of death Antigone asserts herself, and it is because of this assertion that she is triumphant over the king. These few illustrations must for the moment suffice, as the subject will be considered more fully later, but enough has been said to show what I mean when asserting that the Greeks were supremely 'human' in their outlook on life. They emphasized the sense of values in men and its frequent conflict with the values, or rather lack of values, which nature gives, and they did this with such singleness of purpose, with such indifference to the minor aspects of the life of human beings, such as their local characteristics and local feelings, that wherever the Greeks are read and studied by men, of whatever race and nationality, they are at once, and more than others, recognized as completely human. For this human centrality of aim the term or phrase '*rein menschlich*' (purely human) has been coined, and we can use it here without hesitation for our purpose. It means, however, not a universal outlook which is obtained by abstracting coldly from the individual, but by seeing the universal in the individual, which is a very different thing.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

Their figures and heroes remain Greek, and to that extent local, but what is characteristic is that the elements which make them Greek, and therefore distinct from other races, are not emphasized. What is emphasized is that which makes them the same as other people, and because this was stressed, the Greeks remain models to the human race.

The Greek culture epoch from which we have taken these few examples is roughly the period regarded as the highest level of their achievement, the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., the age of the great tragic writers, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Phidias the sculptor, Pericles the statesman, and of the Platonic dialogues with their hero Socrates, the last of whom will receive more attention later. In the death of Socrates an excellent example is given of the Greek human freedom, particularly as we have here an historical figure whose genial, if ugly, face has smiled encouragingly through the centuries. Without romantic heroics, and without invective against those who had condemned him, he passed away, firmly convinced that there were two series of events in the universe, and that he had found and given his life for the right one. Space forbids further discussion, but it must not be forgotten that in the ethics of the

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

Stoics and other philosophical schools, and in the private behaviours of innumerable individuals, the same humanity was manifested many times in the centuries which followed the death of Socrates.

After the Greeks it is customary to discuss the Roman epochs of Scipio, Laelius and Cicero, on the one hand, and of Augustus, Maecenas and Virgil on the other. Avowedly imitators on the formal side at least of their Greek literary masters, the Romans succeeded in creating a literature which is itself a model of what imitation should be, and by this initial event of European comparative literature set the example for future races to follow. Like the Greeks, they, too, knew how to portray the universal in the individual, and, as a result, their works, if to a less extent than the Greek creations, have survived centuries of criticism and remain even to-day as monuments of human genius. In them too what is characteristically Roman is expressed without detriment to what is common to all men, and in their imitation of the Greeks, an imitation which includes the Greek view of life, they found in the Stoic cosmopolitan philosophy something not alien to their own austere and dignified temper. In the Aeneas of Virgil this is seen at its best, and in the threefold doctrine of pietas, to the Gods, to kin and to fellowmen, the ethical

THE CIVILIZED MAN

will is manifest in spite of epic machinery which derogates a little from the beauty of the whole. In the mission of Aeneas to 'carry the penates to the Ausonian land', we feel also that literature has taken on that vision of man's cosmic aim which is seen again in later literature in the voyage of Dante and the quest of Faust, and which, under the symbol of Rome's Empire, is the beginning of the vision of a united mankind. For men's 'works' reveal their inner nature, and in spite of the savage masculinity of Virgil's treatment of Dido, and in spite of a touch of urbanity which causes us to regret the Greek freshness, Aeneas is a type of universal man and a hero of the human race.

Before passing on, as we should do in the ordinary course of literary and artistic development, to the works of the Middle Ages emerging from the ruins of Rome, a halt must be made before an event which occurred almost contemporaneously with the epoch we have mentioned, and which later, to the medieval Virgil of Dante, was to cause a greater sorrow than Dido's. This event, and the culture epoch in which it took place, is again Greco-Roman, and concerns the deeds of a group of men in the Hellenized corner of the Empire inhabited by the Jews. I mention it here briefly because the

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

Crucifixion as a civilized event will be treated of later, but in strict historical sequence it cannot be overlooked. We have already mentioned its historical importance, and it remains now to point out how human it was. There are here a number of men of various classes and nations, Jews, Greeks, Romans and others, not in the least tainted with urbanity, but exemplary in demonstrating the humanity of the ethical will. We have, moreover, an historical set of facts, and these related with objectivity and restraint, and of which the authors, in describing the men they have seen and what they did, whether it be the Roman Pilate, the hypocrite Caiaphas, King Herod, or the traitor Judas himself, do not for a moment 'let themselves go' or indulge in violent denunciation of their enemies. They are, in truth, as civilized as any men at any time, and we have not the slightest difficulty in recognizing ourselves (ourselves, that is, on a high level) in them. Now as this story has been read countless times and has had more influence on European thought than any other, it is worth while to lay emphasis on this side of it at this point, and with this appreciation we will leave it for the time being.

As our intention is not so much to deal with odd examples of civilized men as with culture epochs as a whole, we are justified in ignoring

THE CIVILIZED MAN

the Dark Ages and their occasional King Alfreds and Charlemagnes, and passing on to the next epoch which has indisputable claims to be a culture epoch in the complete sense. We will therefore at once pass on to the year 1300, which forms a convenient date for the age of Dante, better named as the first Renaissance. In him and in the men about him and whom he portrayed, Brunetto Latini the encyclopaedist, whom he meets with so much pathos in Hell; Guido Cavalcanti, the noble free-thinker; Farnata, the Epicurean, whom he finds unmoved in his bed of fire, and many others, we can see the human individual in process of rebirth, and the world again growing civilized. No one who has read the account in Malbolge, of the last voyage of Ulysses, can fail to feel a feeling of human endeavour and the spirit of men who are free.

'O frati, dissi, che per cento milia Perigli siete giunti all'
occidente

A questa tanto picciola vigilia De' nostri sensi ch'è del
rimentente,

Non vogliate negar l'esperienza, Diretro al sol, del mondo
senza gente.

Considerate la vostra semenza: Fatti non foste a viver come
bruti,

Ma per seguir virtute e conoscenza.' ⁴

⁴ 'O brothers,' I cried, 'who through a hundred thousand dangers have reached the West, deny not to this the brief

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

These are few indications, but they are enough. The same two series which were apparent in the Greek and Roman outlook are here also, and here also is no contempt of the mediæval kind on the earth for human life. For where Dante differs from the mystic and from those whose emphasis is wholly upon religion is in his valuation, for its own sake, of the life of man on earth, to which life in the Earthly Paradise restored on the height of the Purgatorial mountain he has erected the noblest of monuments. We shall return to him later when we come to deal with religion and the nature of human peace. In his Paradise in the famous encounter with the lady Piccarda he goes a step beyond the human outlook, and finds not only the ethical series to which so often reference has been made, but also the Will toward peace which is its source and also its foundation.

Now in appreciating the movement of literature and art in the modern period it behoves us first of all to remove an obstacle which stands in our way and which is to be found in the modern system of nomenclature, ancient, medi-

vigil of your senses that remains, experience of the unpeopled world behind the sun. Consider your origin. Ye were not formed to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge.' *Inferno*, xxvi, 112.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

eval and modern. These divisions, and particularly the last two, have ceased to be more than conventional and have no longer the justification which they once had at the time of the Renaissance of rousing men from what then seemed a medieval torpor and obscurity. From our present vantage-point and in our modern less unprejudiced state of mind, we can and must do away with the distinction which the West of Europe makes between the medieval and the Renaissance epochs as two completely and opposed systems divided by the year 1500, and look round for a truer reckoning. This is not far away, and has already been given in the past. For just as Rome, after a period of localism and quasi-barbarism, created a great literature by imitation of Greek masters, so also Italy, in the thirteenth century, turned for its inspiration to Rome and learned from her the gift of universality. In Dante there appears a new Virgil, and side by side with Aeneas, and greater than he, are the human figures in Dante's *Commedia*, in whom, as in the classics of old, all men can find their image. This was the first Renaissance, and after it others were to follow.

The second was that of Western Europe, and was creative in many directions, whether in the plastic arts, as in Italy in Michael Angelo and

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

Donatello, or in literature, as in France and England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, ages which include Montaigne, Corneille, Shakespeare and Milton. And in a real sense the third and last Renaissance was that of Germany, of Herder, Goethe, Schiller and Kant, with which names we can fitly close the series of imitations, which Rome 2,000 years before was the first to achieve. If we must use the term Renaissance, and it is hard to avoid using it, it must apply to all of these, and in so far as it affirms a rebirth we must know what is reborn each time. In every case the same thing is reborn, and what it is is this. *The art of seeing the universal in the individual, and in portraying the universal, revealing what is the substance of man.*

Of the English Shakespeare is the first and greatest, and from his works we will choose but two, in order to make plain what this substance is for him, and how far in his complicated way he gives once again the human view of the Greeks. This we can do by examining two of his plays, *Lear* and *Hamlet*, both of which, at first sight, seem to be as realistic and unethetical as any modern play could be, and a barren region wherein to find our dual series. Yet the two series are here, if below the surface, and

THE CIVILIZED MAN

with them man in all his dignity, smitten as Job was smitten, but undismayed. In Lear, a tale of folly, of filial ingratitude, of horror piled on horror, and, at the end, death and ruin for all, whether good or bad, just or unjust. We recall the cry of Lear at the end, weak, and almost mad:

‘Had I your tongues and eyes I’d use them so
That heaven’s vault should crack.
I know when one is dead and when one lives,
She’s dead as earth. . . .
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all?’

Horror no whit inferior to that witnessed by the Greek Hecuba during the sack of Troy, and no whit less real. More awful, too, since Lear in his madness has no apocalyptic vision and makes no appeal to the gods who shall put things right. Horror without mitigation, and yet somehow, like the tale of Troy, a fine and wonderful thing. For what is the feeling arising out of this horror and the opinion of men on its awfulness? First that such things are, they are natural and do occur, forming the series of truth, the world being of stuff such as this. But also that another series is desired, and is more real, rising from the will of man and asserted by it. In Lear, Cordelia has an inkling of this series, and they also who behold Lear dead.

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

'Vex not his ghost. Oh, let him pass; he hates him
That would upon the rack of this rough world
Stretch him out longer.'

For notice, the ruin of Lear, and the ruin of Cordelia, do not cause us to think that the world is a place of ruin, nor that life is unfit to be lived. *This conclusion is never drawn, and has never been drawn in tragedy.*⁵ It is precisely because of the conflict, the cleft between truth and desire, and the will to overcome it, that the greatness of men is seen. The hero falls and lies low, but something is triumphant and this something is the assertion of the human will over nature. In the other play, *Hamlet*, the agony is still more complicated and many men have sought a solution. There the end seems without hope, and Hamlet the greatest pessimist,

'Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story,'

are his last words to his friend, than which, as a judgment on human life, few words in the history of man ring out more terrible. The inference is that felicity is death, and that extinction of being, 'Nirvana', is the highest goal of man. For a moment, yes, but on reflection it will be

⁵ Occasional outbursts such as Sophocles' 'it is better not to be born', do not affect the total impression left by tragedy.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

seen how untenable is this interpretation, and how near Hamlet is to our ideal of man. Not only that he knows of a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will, but he knows also that he lives for an end, and that this he must accomplish. He must accomplish it in spite of a hostile and treacherous world, in spite of a mother and a Claudius, and in spite, last of all, of his own doubting mind.

'Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unused.'

Too much has been made in the past of Hamlet's divided mind, and of the effort made to show how internal his conflict is when compared to that of the Greeks or even of other modern plays. His tragedy is not of another kind than these, nor is his fate more hopeless than that of more single-minded heroes. In his case, also, there is an ideal series of events which ought to be and which the mind wills, only it is placed one step back in time, and must be written as 'ought to have been'. His business is to return as best he can to the state before, to divert the 'natural series' into this, and he can only do it by obeying the command of his father who is dead. To accomplish it is more than he can endure,

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

and, achieving it, he falls in the act. But because he does it, by whatever devious and winding means, he is asserting the will which is human, with no less determination than Hecuba, or Lear, or Cordelia in their several ways. What he does is not 'moral' in the narrow sense, but it is more than that, it is 'ethical'. He comes out it all magnificent in dignity, and as one whose life has been noble and worthy.

'For he was likely had he been put on,
To have proved most royally.'

It is not otherwise in the Phèdre of Racine, who, with as much reason as Hamlet, may be called a tragic figure of the 'divided' will. More than most human beings, she incorporates visibly in her gestures, and audibly in her very words, the higher and the lower will in man. The lower will of desire, which is already in power at the outset, urges her to love her son, while the higher asserts another aim. Between these two she is torn, and as the action proceeds, by her own weakness and through the hostility of the gods, she gradually yields to nature. Catastrophe comes, ruin for Hippolytus and Oenone, and then, last of all, for her, a final assertion that the higher series was right, and a dignified death. Yet she, who has sinned *à la*

THE CIVILIZED MAN

chrétienne no less than Hamlet, who is almost pagan, leaves the same tragic impression, *that life is a fearful conflict and none the less is worth living.*

Now with Racine the Renaissance in the ordinary acceptance of the term ended, but there remains one period to be discussed in which, for wellnigh the last time, human freedom and the universal human outlook is preserved. This is the German Renaissance, which occurred at the end of the eighteenth century, and of which the greatest figures are Goethe, Schiller, and the philosopher Kant. Coming at the end of the period which began with Dante they are particularly interesting for this very reason, and Goethe himself, as a man of two centuries, demands special attention. In the first place, like Dante of 1300, Goethe of 1800 is a man who has passed, and who has civilized himself in passing, from the local and temporal to the universal and timeless, and discovered anew for himself the art of seeing the universal in the particular. On the outward political side he renews Dante; on the inner and artistic he renews him again. Dante began as a Florentine democrat, only to end as a citizen of the world; Goethe, as a German *Stürmer* and *Dränger*, only later to proclaim the *rein menschlich* in man and

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

to refuse, in the face of foreign subjection, the urge of his countrymen to hate the French. Dante began with the *Vita Nuova*, an occasional poem in the medieval mystic style, only to end by creating the *Divine Comedy*, a poem for all ages; Goethe with the first part of *Faust*, only to end by writing the *Iphigenie*, the Prologue in Heaven and Part II of *Faust*. Between these two, Dante and Goethe, lie five centuries of human freedom, and a race of artists who are the modern successors of the Greeks. For before Dante and after Goethe the individual ideal of man was and is in abeyance to a conception of men *en masse*, which is a very different thing, and in the second of these two periods we now find ourselves.

I have said that the first part of *Faust* was written in Goethe's youth and in days when he was still Romantic, but I should qualify this with the plea of Goethe's genius. Even in *Faust*, Part I, the hero is not completely uncivilized; there are the marks of the highest intelligence, and poetry of a kind unequalled in the world before. But to see the full power of the work it must be considered as a whole, in the greater framework which the second part and the Prologue in Heaven afford it. The central theme of Part I is the Gretchen story, an episode of

THE CIVILIZED MAN

Romantic love in direct line from Dido, Francesca (of Dante) and the Juliet of Shakespeare, mirroring in poetry the growing influence of the cult of women which had come into the world with the Christian religion. But as it stands in Part I, unlike Dido, unlike Francesca, and even unlike Juliet, if we consider together the complete work of Shakespeare, it lacks the wider framework into which a complete human view of life was to place it, and this only comes with Part II. Moreover, in its emphasis on feeling rather than on thought, in its conception of the good life as an aimless urge to do, with evil as mere negation of this, it leaves the reader unsatisfied at many points and often puzzled over the direction of the feelings involved. All this has its explanation, both in the naturalistic pantheism of feeling, which was the philosophy of Goethe in his early years, as in the frequent interruptions which the work, in its performance, had suffered. The task of the second part, which, from the point of view of poetry is inferior to it on the whole, was to fill out some of these defects and to present Goethe's outlook as not finally diverse from the one we have said to be human. Part II shows us the hero, Faust, engaged in many activities, both artistic, as in the quest of Greek beauty in the 'Helena', and materialistic, as in the colonization plan at

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

the end, and all the time throughout its action less and less under the influence of his own feelings, more and more in search of an ideal aim. For *pari passu* with the lessening influence of feeling, expressed in Part I by the famous remark:

‘Gefühl ist Alles’

Faust finds himself ever less in opposition to Mephistopheles, who himself, in a reverse direction, develops to meet his would-be victim on a common level. In Part I Mephistopheles represents the cold ironic Voltairean outlook of the Cartesian eighteenth century in direct contrast to Faust, whereas in Part II both Faust and he are shown as slowly converging to a common human centre. To such an extent is this true that at the very end, when Mephistopheles in happy triumph at his imagined victory over Faust, beholds his victim snatched from his grasp, he accepts the situation as serenely as Faust himself, and could almost be shown as ready to carry on the uncompleted work of Faust in draining the marsh. But what is important is the common centre to which they are working, and it is expressed by Faust in the following way. In his last desire to turn philanthropist and to make the world better for man he had carelessly allowed Mephistopheles to destroy the two old people whose house had

* ‘Feeling is everything.’

THE CIVILIZED MAN

blocked his way, and the ensuing remorse aroused in him by this wanton act brings him to reflect on his activity. He reflects on the course of his life, renounces his aimless youth, and, appointing an aim for himself, the nature of which will be considered in a moment, he formulates the law of measure, that man shall not for ever obey his instinctive urge to acquire and do, but shall set a limit, or mark, to guide his action.

‘Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um.’⁷

There are in truth other works of Goethe in which the law is given more distinctly than this, and a true philosophy of Faust should be considered in relation to them. He has come at last to a belief in two series of events, and they are the two which we have found in the works of men hitherto. He has travelled, in fact, a long way since the day when ‘Gefühl’ was ‘Alles’, and from a monist of feeling is now a dualist of the human kind. Finally, at the very end of the play, the action turns towards the transcendental, probably under the influence of Kant, and the old Platonic belief that true reality lies beyond, that the apparently real is a symbol of the true appears wonderfully expressed in the words:

‘Alles Vergängliche, ist nur ein Gleichnisz
Das Unzulängliche, hier wird’s Ereignis.

⁷ ‘Let him stand fast and look about him here.’

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

Das Unbeschreibliche, hier wird's getan
Das Ewig-weibliche, zieht uns hinan.'⁸

But before we conclude, it is the figure of Goethe as a man of two centuries, of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which must be carefully considered, and it appears most clearly in the aim which Faust gives himself of a philanthropic work for the good of humanity, in draining the marsh for the colonization of men:

'Ja, diesem Sinne bin ich ganz ergeben,
Dies ist der Weisheit letzter Schluss;
Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben
Der täglich sie erobern musz.
Und so verbringt, umrungen von Gefahr,
Hier Kindheit, Mann und Greis sein tüchtig Jahr.
Solch ein Gewimmel möcht' ich sehen,
Auf freiem Grund mit freiem Volke stehen,'⁹

⁸ 'All things corruptible are but reflection,
Earth's insufficiency here finds perfection.
Here the ineffable wrought is with love,
The Eternal-womanly draws us above.'

Tr. H. B. Garrod, *Dante, Goethe's Faust and other Lectures*,
p. 229.

⁹ 'Yea, to this thought I cling (with virtue rife)
Wisdom's last fruit, profoundly true:
Freedom alone he earns as well as life,
Who day by day must conquer them anew.
So girt by danger, childhood bravely here,
Youth, manhood, age, shall dwell from year to year;
Such busy crowds I fain would see,
Upon free soil stand with a people free.'

Tr. H. B. Garrod, *Dante, Goethe's Faust and other Lectures*,
p. 223.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

—when he enjoys perfect bliss in anticipatory feeling of such an activity in the future. Now it is striking to see Goethe here expressing the ideal of the Baconians, and pegging out claims for posterity in the modern spirit of the nineteenth century. Comparing this for a moment with the remark of Sir Thomas Browne, which was quoted in the introductory chapter,¹⁰ and keeping in mind the growth of the belief in human progress during the eighteenth century, we can see how far we are from the service of God and how near the service of man. Only our knowledge of the whole of Goethe's outlook¹¹ prevents us from holding him to be a humanitarian of the higher kind and from thinking that he held the final service to be human. We know this is not so from the mystic song at the end, in which all human activity is made into a symbol of eternity, and from other remarks of his, such as

‘Alles Drängen, alles Ringen,
Ist ewig' Ruh in Gott den Herrn.’¹²

But the point to notice is the emphasis laid on human service of a material kind, and it is pro-

¹⁰ With respect to the proper reason for giving alms and serving mankind.

¹¹ Particularly in a conversation with Soret, where Goethe insists that a man *improve himself* before improving other people. (*Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um.*)

¹² ‘All strife, all conflict is eternal peace in God the Father.’

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

phetic of the future development of the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For inevitably, once the service of man to man is made an end in life, and once this is linked up with the Baconian doctrine that knowledge is power, the result is a weakening of the higher human will and the disappearance of the second series of which we have so often spoken. The series of nature becomes itself reality, 'natural' desire the desirable aim, and life sinks on to the natural plane, the activities of the philanthropist becoming only too easily a method of satisfying the natural urge to power under the guise, innocent in appearance, of doing good to other people. The final result artistically, is a literature which no longer expresses ultimate truth and the universal element in man, but the truth of nature alone, and this in its atomistic local forms.

This is what has occurred since the days of Goethe in various movements, each of which has been a reaction against the last, while yet being the same thing under many forms. After Romanticism, realism; after realism, naturalism; then a reaction against naturalism, in *Le Parnasse*, and a reaction to that again in symbolism; then impressionism; last of all expressionism, under the influence of which we now stand. Instead of a drama of a universal kind,

THE CIVILIZED MAN

in which the purely human is given, we have the drama of the Romantics with local colour and melodramatic psychology, of Hebbel with its emphasis on peculiar human states of mind, of the realists with its stress of the empirically sordid,¹⁸ of the naturalists with stress on economic law, and none of these, needless to say, have attained, or can attain, the heights reached by the more human drama of the past. *Faust* itself is the end of the long line we have discussed and itself anticipates the future. The nineteenth century may be described as the century of monist naturalism, just as the Middle Ages before 1300 was the age in extreme form of a sort of theological monism, and where in the latter case man is depressed for the best of reasons, i.e. by the all-prevailing idea of God; in the nineteenth and in the twentieth he is depressed by the idea of nature, in the sense that he has well-nigh been placed on the same level with it. I do not mean by this that many beautiful works of art have not been produced in the past century, but I do deny, and in this there will be many who agree, that the highest level has been

¹⁸ Realism seems to be a sort of Romanticism turned inside out. If we depend on feeling alone, the world will first seem beautiful, then sordid. So, in 1780, Herder was saying that the world was marvellous; Leopardi, two generations later, '*the world is muck*'. The world is surely both, all the time.

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

reached, or even a level of the kind associated with the classical past. What has shifted, and this is the most serious side of the argument, is the ideal of the civilized man himself, and in the last century, after the period of Goethe, we may look in vain for a culture period of the kind we associate with culture. Of individual men who are civilized, and in the highest sense, there has been no lack, but they are either voices crying in a wilderness, or belated adherents of an almost forgotten past, and in neither case can they be taken as representative of the age they live in. Of the philosophical and aesthetic reasons for this I shall speak more plainly in the next chapter, and, for the moment, I confine myself to the human itself. The point is simply this. *The civilized man*, as I conceive of him, *is nothing more or less in the last analysis than the hero of tragedy*,¹⁴ and he represents, in a thousand ways, the limit to which human beings can rise above the nature around them. He is an individualist in the sense that he feels himself to be unique, but he is universal in that he possesses to a high degree the qualities which are the same in all men, Scythian or Greek, bond or free, and

¹⁴ *v.* my article, 'The Roots of Tragedy', *Bookman* (New York), April 1930, and 'Tragedy and History', *Criterion*, July 1930.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

which remains the same, whether in the human past, present or future. He is dualistic in outlook because he does not recognize the natural life as an end, and sees beyond it an end which is greater and to which, by restraining his own instincts, he submits. Finally he draws his knowledge not from reason alone, but from intuition also, and is aware, profoundly aware, that, as a natural thing, the universe is irrational,¹⁵ and to an unlimited extent hostile to him. But while intuition tells him this, it also tells him that there is something more than nature in the universe, more than reason, more than feeling, so that in the hour of collapse, when the curtain falls on his last appearance, the note is not one of pessimism or despair, but of immeasurable and marvellous hope.

¹⁵ A large part of this chapter depends on Professor Irving Babbitt. This is a point where I believe I am not following him.

III

PHILOSOPHY

WERE it not that the phrase 'the Good, the True and the Beautiful' has become somewhat obscured since Victor Cousin gave his famous lectures du Vrai, du Beau et du Bien in the early years of the nineteenth century, I would have made use of them to provide titles for the last chapters of this work, but I am prevented from doing so by an unfortunate tradition. Instead of the ancient words, therefore, I am writing down Philosophy, Art and Religion, words which are less pretentious, which mean just the same, and which, fortunately, have not been contaminated by a century of positivist materialism.

What I mean by philosophy is not a metaphysical system and does not pretend to any finality. It does not even claim to be new, for, as it is written, the preacher said of old, 'There is nothing new under the sun', and since the preacher's day time has only added weight to his statement. It is a practical philosophy of an

THE CIVILIZED MAN

ethical kind, and its aim is to inquire first and foremost what is the purpose of the universe, whence in some measure may be derived the purpose of man. Now, although down the ages many thinkers have applied themselves to this problem, and although divers systems have been devised, it is still possible, by examining critically the works of men in the past, to discuss the same problem again from a fresh point of view. For men do not change very much superficially, and fundamentally they do not change at all. La Bruyère, who was himself an ethical philosopher, said in the opening chapter of his book, *De l'Homme*, no doubt in order to excuse its length, 'Tout a été dit,' which admission did not prevent him from saying it all over again in a new and entertaining way. In similar wise what I have to say has been said many times, both in the remote and also in the recent past, with far more skill, if no less conviction, than my own.

The argument begins by admitting that man, as a natural product, descends from a common ancestry with the animals, but proceeds to maintain that there is something in men which is not in the animal and which cannot have evolved from them. This something is the power to say 'no' to the instincts, to restrain or control them

PHILOSOPHY

with a view to some ulterior end, and goes in ordinary human parlance by the name of will. It is a simple doctrine and plain, but the conclusions it enables us to draw are of a most important and surprising nature. In the first place, from the psychological side it gives a point of vantage for a criticism of modern psychology, and particularly of that type of modern psychology, of Freud, Adler, and Jung,¹ which tends to make man a mere servant, or even a slave, of his own subconscious instincts. For this power to stop cannot be described itself as an instinct, comparable to the instincts of fear-flight, for example, or to any one of the bundle of instincts which, according to Professor MacDougall, make up the agent known as man. We know it is not this because, when we restrain our instincts, as when we refrain from striking a person who has struck us, we feel it as a kind of opposition to the instincts, and that it acts as a break upon them. This is a fact of such common experience that it can hardly be denied as an empirical truth, and only theoretical reasoning which ignores experience can attempt to explain it away. Further, since the act of restraint is of a purely negative nature and has no positive content in itself (although it pro-

¹ This does not mean that much of their work is not good.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

duces one) it can hardly be paralleled to the instincts themselves, which, by definition, are expansive and unrestrained. If we may be allowed to use psychological terminology, it can best be described in this manner. The instincts all work outwards from a common centre, which we may call the natural ego, the existence of which as an empirical reality only a fanatical behaviourist will deny. Even in so small a creature as the amoeba which procreates, as we are told, by splitting into two parts, this natural instinctive urge must be granted as a *sine qua non* of further discussion. In man, also, the natural ego exists, and its reality is felt in various forms, in the desire to live, to procreate, to acquire food, money, land, and other commodities—all these are forms of the natural ego, the expansive instinctive element which is the driving force behind the human race as an animal creation. But in man, as distinct from all other living things on the one hand, and from the parts of physical nature—such as the atom—on the other, there seems to be this other element, the presence of which is manifested not by virtue of theory but by positive human experience. This element shows itself as a power to circumscribe all these various outward working instincts or desires,

PHILOSOPHY

and to stop them, restrain them, and control them at a given point. This point is not merely formed by a natural check such as would be produced by a conflict of two instincts, as when fear neutralizes an instinctive desire to acquire some object, but by some power behind fear which says, 'Be not afraid,' and behind acquisitiveness which says, 'Acquire no more,' and which, to all the other instincts, says to each in its turn, 'So far shalt thou go and no further, and here shall thy urge be restrained'. This is the power which is the will and which constitutes the really human element in man. Scientifically speaking, it cannot be said to exist at all, for, as we have seen, it has no positive content. It says 'stop' and nothing more. It manifests itself not by what it does but by what it prevents man from doing. It is not an action which can be analysed in itself, but simply a fact of experience and the most important fact of all. Yet in spite of its negative content it is responsible for all that is noble in man, from the beginning when man began till the day when man shall cease to be.

Now from the point of view of philosophy this power is called the will, and those who believe that such a will exists in men are committing themselves to a belief in the freedom of

THE CIVILIZED MAN

the will. What this freedom is requires however some preliminary definition, owing to the existence of other free will conceptions of a totally different kind. The freedom of which we speak is a freedom which man has not to act or do, but on occasion and for certain ends, to 'refrain from doing',² and is therefore in a sense an 'unnatural' thing. Doing and acting in its spontaneous form is nothing more or less than an instinctive urge and is given, or determined, by nature in exactly the same way as the bundle of instincts we have already mentioned is determined. It is in truth simply this bundle of instincts. Thus it follows that many so-called strong-willed men are really merely men of strong natural instincts and are frequently found to be lacking in the type of will which is the free will in our sense of the word. Napoleon, for example, and the Nietzschean ideal of the superman, were men of this kind, and to call them free is merely to confuse an overdose of natural capacity with the freedom which is the peculiar mark of man. It does not follow that because Napoleon was born enterprising and ambitious he was free and voluntary in our sense any more than the superman of

² This practically amounts to 'selection' among the things which nature would have us do.

PHILOSOPHY

Nietzsche³ is free because he tramples on the slave virtues of the Christian. Not enterprise or ambition is the mark of human freedom, but the power, if need be, for some higher end, to curb enterprise, and, if need be, to refrain ambition. No man born can make himself enterprising if he is not born enterprising, nor ambitious if he is not born so, but in so far as he has these instincts, and others like them, he can become free by acting on them, and, to give a simple instance, by contenting himself with little where there is much to take. This faculty is the higher and human will as distinct from the will of instinct, and between the two lies all the achievement, for good or ill, of the human race. Between these two lie philosophy, art and religion, all the 'works' of man, and as their creator, filling the space between, that supreme product which nature cannot produce which we call the human character. Its aim, as we shall see in a later chapter, is *peace*, an aim which is not in nature, but which the higher will, whether in man or in the universe, imposes on nature from without.

Now this may seem a curious definition of freedom, even as our definition of the man of

³ Which has a parallel in the human ideal of Walt Whitman. Both seem to lead finally not to human exaltation, but to depression and pessimism.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

will may seem strange, and it may seem at first dangerously like a gospel of quiescence. What causes us to find it quiescent is largely the influence, profound and insidious, of the modern Baconian movement, with its gospel of progress and of indefinite expansion, aiming not at peace but at eternal unrest. In pre-Baconian days the aim was very different and placed in quite another quarter. To make this clear will involve a closer examination of the problem of freedom in the past history of human thought, and an attempt to define, in view of the past, exactly where man stands in this regard to-day.

Now it is evident that a man will not refrain from any given course of action to which instinct impels him without what is called a reason to prevent him, and it is evident also that since man is a rational creature he will only surrender the attainment of any given aim if he feels that some other aim is better and more worthy of attainment. Further, since the question of aim suggests a final aim, this being namely the aim of human life, we are now at the crux of the problem and must adopt some criterium and highest value for the proper living of life. It is, in fact, this question of values, as we have seen, which cuts off man from the animals; and involved in it is the mystery of man's refusal

PHILOSOPHY

to adopt the series of natural events, which we have shown to be the essence of the tragic conception of life as seen in the works of man.

As regards the aim and purpose of life, which will require special treatment by itself, we need only bear in mind that in so far as it concerns the individual man it is found by imitation of other individuals and that the imitation can be of two kinds. It can be imitation of other men whom we feel to be higher than ourselves, the sort of feeling described popularly as hero worship, or it can be imitation of some being higher than ourselves under the name of religion. These two imitations, human and divine, exhaust the possibilities and are really not two, but one, in that the divine exemplar is only the human carried to the point of perfection. For we are not setting out to prove that the universe is threefold in structure, but dual only, and once above the animal instinctive plane, the only element left is divine, as it was to Paul when he said, *‘τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν’*,⁴ or Sir Thomas Browne, in his remark, ‘There is surely a piece of divinity in us, something that was before the elements and owes no homage unto the sun’. These two imitations are exemplified in the outlook of the two races which

⁴ ‘For we are also his offspring’.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

were discussed in the introductory chapter of this book, the Greeks who believed in the human ideal of the *kalos kai agathos*⁵ (personified in such figures as Socrates and the Epicurean and Stoic 'sage') and the Hebrews who saw the model, if a high and remote one, in Jehova (what is man that Thou shouldst be mindful of him?). The fact that the Greeks, with the exception of Plato, who turns in the Hebrew direction, stress the human ideal and its attainability, whereas the Hebrews stress the divinity and remoteness of God, does not mean that their attitude is essentially different and does not detract from the central point, which is that both of them erect standards of right and wrong and proceed to arrange their moral judgments accordingly. *They appeal to a limit and believe in a limit, knowing well that without a limit all things tend to become equally good and equally bad, so that finally no judgments are possible.* Now we know that nature itself gives no limit, being expansive by 'nature', and that, biologically speaking, the amoeba is not better than the ape, nor the ape than man, so that this faculty or power of placing a limit, of seeing an end, does not seem to proceed from matter. Yet, as Mr. T. S. Eliot has pointed out

⁵ Compare the 'superior man' of Confucius.

PHILOSOPHY

lately,⁶ either this power comes from below and from the animal, or from above, i.e. from God or the limit imagined, and since we have shown that it cannot come from below, it must come from above. For this reason the Jehova ideal of the Hebrews is more true than the *kalos kai agathos* of the Greeks, and their emphasis was even more than the Greek on the right source. And in truth we find that the Greek thinkers did trace perfection in something which was outside man, particularly in the Platonic ideal, but also in the Aristotelian conception of pure form. They felt also the feeling of reverence which man has towards that which is perfect and were to that extent religious. Moreover, it is striking that the characteristic of the divine in their philosophy was not matter nor nature in the modern sense, but in Plato, for example, a power of restraint best seen in the myth of the Phaedrus of the rider '*nous*' restraining the good and the evil horses. It is seen also in Aristotle in the conception of the Godhead as Pure Form, which is the power that informs raw matter with vitality and gives to it its many forms. Finally, in the entire world fabric worked out by Aristotle with his scale of ascending forms from the

⁶ In the *Criterion*,

THE CIVILIZED MAN

lowest raw matter to the supreme form, which is God, one cannot help perceiving another guarantee of the argument already advanced, that it is the power which gives shape, which restrains and forms, which is nearer to the source of things, in spite of its negative nature. Pure Form in Aristotle is the Godhead itself, at the opposite pole from raw matter, and it is, moreover, like the higher will we have found in man, a negative conception. Its function from the cosmic point of view is the same as that of the will, and its peculiar function, to create cosmos out of chaos, is not dissimilar.

Now one great advantage of this theory that the divine element in the universe is identical in essence with the higher will in man, is that it helps us towards a solution of the old free will versus determination problem, which for so many centuries has troubled the mind of man and which, even to-day, still awaits a solution. It is, of course, a problem to which no final answer can be given, and occurring as it occurs, at the point where knowledge and will cross each other, it involves continually two series of ideas, those which are the result of reason, and those which are the result of ethics, the world we know to be, and the world we desire to be. Among the Greeks, the answer was usually

PHILOSOPHY

given in terms of reason, and it was the belief of Socrates for example, that complete knowledge and a desirable world were one and the same thing; a theory which Aristotle, who was very much of a scientist, seems to be working out systematically in his scale of world objects from Pure Form to raw matter. Likewise in the systems of the great moral philosophers, Zeno and Epicurus, the things which reason shows to be and the things which man's moral ideals would will to be, are proved, erroneously we feel, to be identical, and the will and the reason, therefore, are the same. On the other hand, in Plato, as we have seen, ethics, which presupposes a will for something better than what the world gives, is plainly predominant, and he is careful to locate his ideal city far in the distant past, while reserving for the sceptic and the unbeliever, that a pattern of it is laid up in heaven. In him we see in anticipation the ethical outlook of the Middle Ages and the surrender of the idea of a perfect world of a natural kind. What he anticipated Augustine with his *Civitas Dei* achieved, and as he left it it remained, with modifications, till the Renaissance returned in part to the older Greek idea and found a perfection this side of eternity. During all this period we must not forget that

THE CIVILIZED MAN

the stress which the Greeks laid on the reason and the belief entertained by them that it was in the power of the reason to decide the ethical problem invested reason for all practical purposes with the functions of will, and thereby placed the individual man in a position of freedom with regard to the forces of nature. To illustrate this we need only remember the figure of Socrates, calmly drinking the hemlock and finding peace in death, but in no wise holding himself to be determined, either by his accusers or by the hemlock he drinks. Whether reason is regarded as the human factor as among the Greeks, or the will as among the Christians after Augustine, the problem of human life remains essentially the same and is seen as a conflict between a reasonable or voluntary man, on the one hand, and a possibly determined universe on the other. It was an attitude more implicit than avowed and it could be shown, for example, that the Stoics, at least, made reason cosmic and all pervading, God himself, in fact, which would seem to annul the value of human personality. But on closer examination it will be seen that the Stoics, by their doctrine of the '*hegemonikon*', or portion of the divine reason given to each individual man as distinct from the rest of creation, are themselves under-

PHILOSOPHY

mining their own theory and verging on the dualism we preach, by dividing man off from their pantheistic universe and affording him an ideal of his own.

During the early Middle Ages, and after Augustine, it is very definitely ethics, and therefore 'will' which has the predominant position and the only point at issue is to decide how far the human will is able of its own power to achieve the transcendental aim which the Christians gave it, i.e. eternal salvation. According to Augustine this can only be done by the help of the divine will in the form of 'grace', whereas, according to the view put forward by the Irish monk, Pelagius, the human will, by willing right conduct, could attain salvation unaided by God. Fortunately, in the course of centuries, the extreme Augustinian point of view, although triumphant theoretically over Pelagianism, became so diluted with it that human freedom was finally saved and became enthroned in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas at the end of the Middle Ages. In his day the despised reason had again come to the fore, and owing to the influence of Aristotle, as interpreted by the Arabian philosophers, a new synthesis of reason and will had been made, and in the famous strife over the 'universals' we find

THE CIVILIZED MAN

ourselves approaching the problems of modern science. The actual point at issue was a new version of the old Platonic-Aristotelian conflict and concerned itself with deciding whether the names, i.e. the multiplicity of things which the world gives are real (this being called nominalism), or as Plato said, the ideas (meaning the abstract 'universal' classifying terms, goodness whiteness) are the true reality, this being called realism. We have here again a confusion between reason, in nominalism, and ethical values, in realism, which has actually survived till to-day, nominalism being now called empiricism or materialism, while realism is now styled idealism. The root of the confusion is that the medieval thinkers never succeeded in separating 'science' from 'ethics', and although they imagined they were solving the problem of knowledge by means of the conceptualism they finally evolved (according to which the universals exist *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*)⁷ they were really mixing up the two series in an indiscriminate heap which only a true dualism is adequate to straighten out.

From our point of view the work of Thomas Aquinas is important in its relation to human

⁷ i.e. the ideas (names) are *before* things (in the mind of God), *in* things (as they are) and *after* them (by abstraction). This was the synthesis called conceptualism.

PHILOSOPHY

personality and by virtue of his influence on the poet Dante, whereby he can be called the first humanist philosopher of the Middle Ages. As this particular problem stood in his day there was a twofold danger threatening from opposite directions, both of them hostile in a serious sense to the real valuation of human personality. On the one hand the mystics were busy laying all emphasis on the human soul and depressing the rational side, while on the other the Arabian Aristotelian Averroës had practically succeeded in denying any transcendental values outside the material universe and had laid it down in particular that man could have no claim either to immortality or rational freedom. Both sides, in fact, had split the idea of human personality into two parts, the mystics by attaching the human soul to God and leaving the body helpless, and the Averroists by positing a universal vitalized matter equivalent to God but granting man a share in it only during his lifetime, after which he is dead and ended as though he had never been. Aquinas' great work was to unite these two streams of thought by means of his '*principium individuationis*' or principle of individuation. This he accomplished by emphasizing the fact that the principle of human personality is neither in matter nor in form,

THE CIVILIZED MAN

neither in the body nor in the soul, but in the *occasional but real* unity of the two. In other words, God and nature, the power from above and the force from below, co-operate in the production of each individual human being, the result being one and indivisible to all eternity, and thus he saved both the 'natural' and the 'divine' part of man. It is in fact the 'anthropological' or human position which is most prominent in Aquinas and this attitude, together with the rational and critical means which he adopts to prove it, makes him not merely a philosophical counterpart of the medieval humanist St. Francis, but also a forerunner of Descartes and his rationalism. We can say, therefore, that in Aquinas, as in his pupil Dante, the action of man is free,⁸ and the old position of man versus the universe is maintained.

Now this position was also maintained throughout the development of so-called modern philosophy⁹ from Descartes through

⁸ It can hardly be said that Aquinas proved his argument with regard to human freedom. His general attitude was that man is determined in his desire for blessedness but free to choose the right or wrong way to attain it. Dante's *Inferno* presents a poetical vision of men who have freely chosen the wrong way.

⁹ The current of materialism was, of course, always flowing (Hobbes, Gassendi, etc.), but it had less vogue.

PHILOSOPHY

Spinoza and Leibniz down to Kant, all of whom, without exception, believed in human freedom, and were often, without being aware of it, quite as teleological as the Greeks and the medieval philosophers had been. This is as much as to say that while declaring their intention of making a clean sweep and beginning all over again, they really began by assuming that man had a divine aim and then proceeded to fit in their new systems into a teleological frame, with results that are sometimes contradictory to their own logical, but, none the less, admirable systems of philosophy. The first of the three, Descartes, strongly influenced by the mathematical interests of his age (and also by the neo-Stoicism¹⁰ of the period) developed a dualism of mind over against matter, and adopted a whole series of medieval terms, the most important item of which was the word '*substantia*', a stumbling-block in the path of modern philosophy for many years. The second, Spinoza, endeavoured to dissolve the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter into a final substance⁷ of a deterministic kind to which he gave equally the name nature or God. Unfortunately for his logic, as soon as he had worked this out in geometrical form, he undermined it

¹⁰ Hence his emphasis on 'reason'.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

for all philosophical purposes by his '*Idea hominis tanquam naturae humanae exemplar*' (no less fatal than the Stoic *hegemonikon*), which was able to rise, in almost a mystical manner, to the contemplation of the deity in the 'intellectual love of God'. The fourth of the series, Kant, announced somewhat obscurely that the real nature of the material world was unknowable and inaccessible to reason, but affirmed deliberately the existence of a world of values the *fons et origo* of which is God and human faith in Him, a theory which he weakened by cutting it completely off from nature¹¹ and natural impulse. Leibniz, the third, who lived almost contemporaneously with Spinoza, is important for our world of to-day more than the other three by reason of the service which he rendered in discarding the Cartesian-medieval idea of 'substance' in favour of the idea of dynamic 'force'. In doing so he seems to have been influenced by another medieval idea, the unbroken angelic series filling the space between man and God, but the idea was sufficiently fruitful to lead to startling results.

¹¹ The good in Kant, instead of being a restraint of nature (or better, nature restrained), seems to be a negation of nature. It is, however, difficult to prove that nature is radically bad. Spinoza wisely said that nature was neither good nor bad. When unrestrained, it would seem to be bad.

PHILOSOPHY

Applied by Leibniz to matter, reinforced by the mathematics of the differential calculus, and supported by the Greek atomism of Leucippus it led to his famous dictum '*natura non facit saltum*', and to the whole monad theory. According to this system the existence of matter is denied and the universe becomes a plurality of *metaphysical* points termed monads, each of which potentially contains the whole universe and each of which stands in unbroken series from the smallest individual thing, through man himself to the supreme monad which is God, this last by a curious twist of logic being also the adequate ground of the rest. If we add to the thought of Leibniz the stream of English empirical philosophy of the Locke-Hume kind, itself the first non-teleological system, we begin to see fairly clearly the process by which the universal fabric of substance was slowly disintegrated into parts so tenuous and so infinitesimal that it has become difficult, as Bertrand Russell¹² would have us believe, to distinguish between what is a thought and what a thing. Our own chief objection to the system of Leibniz lies in the circumstance that, although he believed in human freedom, he failed to explain how the

¹² In *Modern Philosophy*.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

group of monads which constitutes a man is more free,¹⁸ in any sense of the word which means something more than sheer spontaneity, than a group of monads constituting a moss or a molecule. Deprived of its teleology, and re-invested with solid materiality, as his system very soon became in the hands of his successors, it became an excuse for unlimited expansion of impulse, and together with English practical psychology forwarded the movement towards empiricism and materialism which has dominated thought ever since. As a result, freedom, from being simply a problem of man versus the universe, has passed into a new and confused stage, into a mingling of the human and the natural from which not even the logic of Kant could save it. With the great movement known as German idealism, derived from a synthesis of Kantian idealism and the naturalism of the German Romantics, space forbids an adequate treatment, but it will be enough to say that in its greatest representative, Hegel, a philosophy was evolved which swallowed up the human entirely in the 'collective soul' of the German historical

¹⁸ Leibniz did try to provide a basis for human freedom, by placing man in more intimate contact with God than other monad groups. This, however, is in contradiction to his otherwise monistic system and by its attempt to differentiate man from the rest of creation reveals a latent dualism.

PHILOSOPHY

school already discussed. We may note, *en passant*, that Hegel's¹⁴ divine ego which realizes itself in the universal consciousness, together with Schopenhauer's cosmic urge (which later Nietzsche adopted for his superman), are all forms of Romantic naturalism clothed in philosophical garb, arising inevitably as soon as humanity threw off its human and teleological aims. On all this movement the influence of Leibniz would seem to be very great as, indeed, if only indirectly, on a large portion of the modern trend of philosophy in general.

Now it is regrettable to note that philosophy since Leibniz, in spite of Kant and his 'human' idealism, has not risen out of the confusion between man and nature which Leibniz inaugurated, and this confusion deserves our particular attention. As soon as the dual conception of the universe was dissolved into monism, the free will problem took on a new and erroneous aspect. Instead of being conceived as a struggle of man against the universe, which it still was in Kant and Schiller, it became simply an inquiry into the problem whether the single stuff of which the universe is com-

¹⁴ Spengler is, in part, a belated Hegelian, and denies the individual human will completely—but Spengler is already discredited.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

posed is vital, i.e. undetermined, or mechanistic, i.e. determined. In either case, we must at once note, man is equally part of the whole and not independent, in any sense, of the universe, so that from the human point of view the problem resolves itself into a decision whether man is vital in a vital universe or mechanized in a mechanized one. In the first case we must believe in the '*élan vital*' of Bergson, itself closely allied to the 'will to power' of Nietzsche, and our vitality will boil down when examined closely into a belief that man is swept or sweeps himself (two identical expressions in this sense) in a cosmic urge to life very difficult to distinguish from the urge of the bundle of instincts which, according to Professor MacDougall, make up the human entity. The problem which really troubles man and which is the base of all ethics, to know what to do and how to behave, and the conviction that this is the highest problem in life, obtains no clarification from this theory, beyond a general summons that he must let himself go and be as much like an animal as possible. On the other hand the theory of complete mechanization, whether of the Cartesian mathematical, nineteenth-century physical, or modern psychological kinds, likewise sheds no light on the question of conduct, and

PHILOSOPHY

serve only to prevent man from doing anything, so leaving him finally in an inhuman condition of unspeakable depression. Again it is obvious that, if our vital urge is an urge in unison with all life, we are as individuals as dependent on our surroundings as we are according to the mechanist, and human character, with all it has stood for in the past, goes by the board. A simple example of this may be found in the philosophy of Walt Whitman, than whom few in the history of the world have more glorified man for his cosmic urge, and whose philosophy, after a few years of ephemeral enthusiasm, produced the same *Weltschmerz* which the similar apotheosis of man in the French Revolution produced. On the other hand, mechanism, which has had a long history and has passed through many stages, from the comparatively simple mathematical world system of Descartes and Newton to the more physical monism of Haeckel and Spencer, has received a set-back in recent years by the discovery that in the atom there appears to be an irrational element inexplicable by the laws of mathematics as we know them to-day. As this particular impasse has been reached almost concurrently with the conclusion of modern psychology that even man's slightest words and gestures are deter-

THE CIVILIZED MAN

mined, the scientific world finds itself in a curious state of conflicting opinions, in which determinism, almost proved in psychology, is well-nigh disproved in physics. Our own comment is that we are not helped in the slightest by a proof of either vitalism or mechanism, and that it matters not one atom to human character whether the atom is the one or the other. Thus monism of either kind, whether vital or mechanistic, leads to a dead end by ignoring the very things which seem to men to be worth doing. One reason for this impasse in philosophy, we may add, is due to the universal lack of consideration paid to the tragic element in art and in life, and to the attempts, numerous, but unsuccessful, to explain the universe by means of scientific knowledge and the human reason alone. These are not sufficient, even from the strictly scientific point of view, for if science is anything it is the classification of facts, and the series of world outlooks, if we may use the phrase, provided by the human experience of the past, is itself a series of facts which also requires classification.

Precisely this inability to appreciate the philosophical importance of the artistic and literary masterpieces of human genius in the past, seems to be explanatory of the insufficiency of the

PHILOSOPHY

various modern philosophies which have sprung up of late years, and which otherwise are based on the most excellent and impeccable logic. We may quote in the first Mr. Bertrand Russell, the apostle of neutral monism, who has recently been mentioned on account of his logical conclusion that a thought cannot be distinguished from a thing, and who holds, consequently, that the physical world is composed of the same stuff as our own sensory consciousness. Although he is prepared to accept the idea of intrinsic good and evil as fundamental notions, he fails to attach them to the human will to which they alone belong, and his ethics terminate in an outlook which is pessimistic and full of disillusionment, in spite of the fact that the artistic feeling of tragedy teaches that the highest optimism rises out of the worst conditions, whether those of Oedipus, or of Hamlet, or of Christ.¹⁵ 'Renunciation of vulgar hopes paves the way to a worshipful contemplation of beauty,' we are told 'a proud acceptance of fate and a courageous loyalty to one's vision of the best'. But how the vulgar hopes may be dis-

¹⁵ Cf. B. Russell, *A Freeman's Worship*: 'Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow sure doom falls pitiless and dark', etc. The history of human tragedies shows that this is *not* the true human attitude.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

tinguished from the non-vulgar, and the best from the worst, the ethics of Mr. Russell and his neutral monism does not teach us, and illumination must be sought in another quarter. A deeper formulation of the modern realistic movement is to be found in the well-known and influential work of S. Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity*, which is probably the best complete scientific philosophy of the modern age. Like Russell, he absorbs the modern space-time theories of Einstein, but is distinguished from the other realists (except Whitehead) by his theology and his conception of the deity. Deity, according to Alexander, is to be defined in terms of the principle of emergence of Lloyd Morgan, according to which nature rises to successively higher and superimposed levels. Although the human mind is the highest product of nature, up to the present, the principle of emergence implies higher levels still.¹⁶ 'Deity is this prospective superiority seen from below, and God is the supreme eminence of infinite deity viewed with reverent expectancy from below by man.' This particular line of thought seems to emphasize the flux of natural development and gives us no centre upon which to stand, while

¹⁶ S. Alexander, *Spinoza and Time*.

PHILOSOPHY

we need hardly say that by postulating a God who has not yet 'emerged' it ignores all the 'facts' of mysticism that God is within reach and always has been since man began to be. On these philosophies the influence of Einstein, and his relativity and space-time universe, is very strong, and is but one further proof that logic alone cannot explain the facts of existence. Similarly, Whitehead grants us a vision of God as the completed 'ideal harmony' and defines Him as becoming an actual being, an actual fact in the nature of truth, and as 'that function in the world by reason of which our purposes are directed'. What exactly he means to say is not obvious, but he fails completely to link together in his vision that connection between the divine will and the human which alone makes a divine vision the real experience for human beings, which it has been and is for countless men.

In other words, we may conclude that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have produced no philosophy which is adequate to do the work of philosophy and able to synthesize into one harmonious whole the latest discoveries of science and the facts aesthetic and literary above all of the human past. They are all, practically without exception, devoted to that

THE CIVILIZED MAN

one-sided view of life proclaimed by Heraclitus in antiquity in the celebrated phrase, 'All things flow', and while they have avoided the error of Parmenides, who maintained stoutly that nothing flows at all, they have failed to give satisfaction. It is not true that nothing moves, and it is not true that all things flow, but it is true that something flows and something remains, and only a realization of this truth, seen by intuition of the kind we have defined, can produce the proper synthesis required. To the realm of the flux belong the theories of modern physics and mathematics, the Space-Time of Einstein and his world which is 'finite but unbounded', and we may add the God of Whitehead and of Alexander. To the realm of that which remains belong the human activities of art and religion, the tragic view of life and finally the will which we have said to be a will to refrain. There are flux and statics in one and the same world, and a view of life which is sane and true can only be attained by a union and combination of the two. To demonstrate this we might repeat what we have already said, that a wide view, which is really wide, rests on the whole of the human past and the attitude of men who remain the same to the world which they find so different. Pythagoras had one

PHILOSOPHY

idea about the universe, Plato another, Aristotle another, Thomas Aquinas, Newton, Kant, and Einstein likewise have others, and we repeat once again that the true view is found, not by rejecting one in favour of the other, but by comparing the one with the other, and finding what is common to all. This will give us a key to the opinions of the future, for as long as the world lasts the theories of science on the nature of the world will continue to change, but man will remain the same. And in this review we cannot, and must not, ignore the opinions of the geniuses of art and literature, who also were men and who also, by insight which sees deeper than logic, saw deeply into the nature of the world.

The truth seems to be that there is both determinism and free will in the universe, and that the two, far from being mutually exclusive, as the monists would have it, are dependent upon each other. If there is to be a will at all, and it is not to play about in thin air, it must of necessity have something to work on, and this something may very well be determined. Now in man, as we have seen, free will does exist and it has also something to work on. What is passive from the point of view of the freedom we have called true freedom is the animal part of man, and this part, being com-

THE CIVILIZED MAN

pletely natural and instinctive, is determined. The bundle of instincts of MacDougall are given by nature as surely as the power of growth is given. But what is not given and what is not determined, what is left to man as freedom, is the higher will of restraint, the will we have called the will to refrain, which maybe is developed by man in the course of his lifetime, and on which all education, not to mention civilization itself, is based. It produced in man what the animals do not have, namely, character. Man alone has this.

If we sum up the centuries of civilized human life according to the conclusions of the preceding pages, it will become plain that an adequate theory of the will, as we define that element, is chiefly lacking in the last two centuries and that we stand to-day at the crest of a wave of naturalism which seems wellnigh on the point of denying the human will at all. As, moreover, in our opinion, the highest forms of art can only be produced by men who possess strong ethical will power, there would seem to be a connection between the present state of philosophy and the contemporary lack of great writers and artists, an analogy for which can only be found by returning to certain periods of the past, such as the later

PHILOSOPHY

stages of antiquity, the early part of the Middle Ages, and, to some extent, the eighteenth century. On the other hand, whenever in the past there has been a belief prevalent, explicit or implicit, in the power of the human will, there has also been a rich production of artistic and literary masterpieces, examples of which have been amply given in the preceding (and later) chapter. To say that the whole modern movement since Leibniz has been a shift in aim from man's end or limit, which is God, to man's origin which is nature, is only another assertion of the same fact, for wherever there is belief in will there must be an 'end' for will to aim at, and in nature there is, as we know too well, no aim at all. Either, then, we must seek our limit in that which is above, or we must cease to seek for a limit at all, which for human beings is, for some inexplicable reason, a thing impossible to do.

IV

ART

As the artistic theory now to be advanced rests on the assumption that man is at all times fundamentally the same, it may be as well to admit from the outset that it also recognizes an absolute and aims at an absolute Truth, Beauty and Goodness somewhere, somehow and sometime. How far this can be proved will appear in the course of the chapter, and it must suffice for a moment to refer to an opinion of Julian Huxley in his *Essays of a Biologist*,¹ which has some bearing on our subject. He admits in one of these essays that in certain branches of human endeavour, in literature, for example, a rock bottom, or rather height of perfection, seems to have been reached, and quotes in support of this the work of Homer and Shakespeare. He admits, further, that it is impossible for the human mind to conceive in that particular direction anything more perfect. This he regards, quite rightly, as very curious in face of the

¹ 'Progress, Biological and other.'

A R T

doctrine of evolution which asserts an ever progressive development from simple and crude forms of life to ever more complex and refined forms, and expects, moreover, in this direction, no limit or absolute end. It is indeed curious that this should be so and that there should present themselves to the scientific mind two such opposed series of evidence, one of unlimited development towards an ever higher end, and the other of an end which is itself perfection. It is not so curious, however, that no solution can be found to it. It is only curious if the evolutionary law of unlimited development is made to apply to human, as well as to natural, phenomena and is simply an effect, and an obvious one, of the dualist philosophy which was briefly sketched in the preceding chapter. A dualist philosophy does provide for two series, and by allowing unlimited development on the naturalist side, while presenting a limit on the human side, both of these phenomena are explained in a satisfactory manner. Man on his lower or animal side has developed from cruder and simpler animal forms. On his higher and specifically human side, which I have treated philosophically under the rubric of 'will', he has not developed from anything but himself, and since his animal part is now, and has always been,

THE CIVILIZED MAN

under the control of will, I can see no reason why on occasion in a few men this control should not approach very nearly to perfection. Aesthetically both Homer and Shakespeare seem to have attained it, and in the medieval conception of the 'saint' we see the same limit in a moral form. Nor do I feel that there has ever been since the human beginning any physical development of men amounting to greater variation than that between a Greek and a Chinese, or an Indian and an Englishman, a variation which we know is not fundamental at all. The feeling which the biologist experiences in face of the splendour of works of art, is a feeling which must have come at one time or another to all who have experienced the feeling of beauty. Man at certain times has touched perfection, not at the same point each time nor in the same manner, but a limit he has reached, whether it be the limit of Shakespeare, or of Michel Angelo, or of Dante. And no eternity of years yet to come, nor further step in human development, can add to what has been done, to what, in fact, may again be equalled but may not be surpassed. Such works are the Book of Job, certain parts of Isaiah, Homer, and many others down to more modern times. These are works which bear witness to the heights that

A R T

mankind can achieve when that which is high in man is in perfect control of that which is low.

As the problem is now to be dealt with from the aesthetic point of view, I shall begin by applying the theory of dualism to the aesthetic works of man on the same lines as it was applied to the scientific. Aesthetic activity here divides into two parts, the part which is expression and the part which is circumscription,² exactly as in human action there is the lower action which is circumscribed or restrained by the higher and refraining action of the will. Expression is common, more or less, to all men, and is found in almost every stage of human culture. It is common also in nature and may be identified finally with that primeval urge which the biologists call life, and which in man has been called by an eminent philosopher as '*l'élan vital*', and by another almost as eminent as '*Der Wille zum Leben*'. On the artistic side expression is found in spontaneous art, particularly, as many suppose, among savages who express in the simplest forms the feeling which they have for the beauty of things. But what is the deciding factor in art, just as the will is the deciding factor in human character, is the form or circumscription which human personality is able to stamp on its own

² Which is equivalent to selection again.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

expressions, and it is precisely on the strength and quality of this form that degrees of value in artistic works may be traced.

Admittedly this principle brings us into immediate conflict with many artistic theories held by modern artists, and, in particular, the Expressionists and neo-Rousseauist enthusiasts, who acclaim the unformed, uncontrolled expression of human individuality, discarding and rejecting any principle of form whatsoever.³ It also brings us into conflict with aestheticians of the school of Benedetto Croce, who maintain that complete expression creates its own form and that form is a sort of appearance or phenomenon produced by expression itself, rather than a principle of restraint imposed upon it. Finally, it brings us into conflict with various schools of psychology which would analyse the meaning of the beautiful into so many neural psychological effects, or into sublimation of a subconscious urge over which the will has no control at all. As against these theories our chief defence is the scientific empirical argument, and it is drawn

³ The Germans are particularly bent on proving that their art is the art of the 'infinite' in contrast to *classical* (Greek) art of the 'finite'. This is probably because their great century is the Romantic Nineteenth. See F. Strich, a follower of Wölflin, *Klassik und Romantik*. (Yet the Germans have Goethe!)

A R T

from the actual works of art and from the actual practice of famous and successful artists in the past.

My intention is to take as a final scheme this division into form and matter, control and expression, and by bringing their elements into connection with human will and human animal nature to judge all art by them. No belief will be advanced that all forms of art are equally good, or that primitive art, because of its alleged spontaneity, is on the same level as the art of civilized men. No belief, moreover, that a perfect picture of a cow in a meadow is as good as a perfect picture of a human being in a palace.⁴ For just as we have bound ourselves down to common human experience, and proclaimed a unity of the human race, so it is averred that that which is nearer to man is higher than that which is far away from him, and that more is contained in art which treats of the human than in art which treats of the non- or sub-human. Further that man is not merely the highest when compared with what is not human, but that also within the human range there is also a higher and a lower art, that because a civilized man is

⁴ This is the theory of *Art for Art's Sake*, in which the subject-matter is indifferent (see Robert Fry, *Vision and Design*, and Clive Bell, *Art*). The contempt of the scientist for art (or heedlessness of it) has led the artist to devise a theory of his own independence of life. Both are probably wrong.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

higher than a savage, a statue portraying him is a greater thing than a statue of a savage, however beautifully executed, and this because a civilized man is higher than a savage. By the same logic Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a greater work than the *Beowulf* of the Anglo-Saxons, even as Milton's England is greater than that of Beowulf, simply because, where there is more to express, there is the substance of the finer art. This is practically equivalent to saying that there is more form in Milton than in Beowulf, and, as a result of more form, more to express. Nature is there always, but man controls it, and it is the forming element in man which is the civilizing influence. In this manner form and expression really grow together, and even as a cube, if lengthened, will also experience a widening, so more form brings with it more expression. But we must remember that it is the form which is creative and which by limiting, concentrating, intensifying natural expression produces the higher art. So Satan and Beowulf are both, when analysed, poetical descriptions of men, but in the one the expression is all but pure nature, in the other there is the concentrated expression of a civilized man, and the relation of the one to the other is that of a child to a man.

This problem of 'primitive' versus 'civilized' has

A R T

been complicated by the confusion of primitive with spontaneous, and by the rise since about 1800 of a school of Bohemian poets, who believe that they are being primitive when they are merely letting go their natural instincts uncontrolled, and who maintain that the highest poetry is so created. It is highly probable, as a matter of fact, that primitive works of art were produced with as careful filing and assiduous hard work, not to mention schooling in primitive tradition, as Horace recommended to the Pisones, and Boileau to the age of Louis XIV, but it is rather with the second thesis of greatest spontaneity as the highest poetry that we must come to grips. The obvious defence, and the only really valid one, is the argument drawn from experience, and this is beyond any doubt in favour of form. It seems to be true that the greatest artists of the past—and the general opinion on the subject of their greatness cannot be ignored—‘sweated blood’ in order to achieve their masterpieces, and, as we prefer to say, carefully circumscribed their natural impulses in order to attain some ideal end. On the monistic theory of Croce, which denies the restraint and circumscription, any artist at any period may by complete expression produce a masterpiece, and the only refutation is that in actual fact they do not seem

THE CIVILIZED MAN

to do so. Moreover, on Croce's theory any expressive content is as good as any other, so that a toad, fully expressed in a work of art, is quite as beautiful as a David by Donatello. Yet most of us feel that there must be a fallacy somewhere, and a fallacy indeed there is. It lies in the fact that men do not in actual practice place toads on the same level as men, and that in truth, by the common verdict of humanity, they are not on the same level. The monistic theory of expression has attained great popularity at the present day, above all in the teaching of art, where it has been encouraged by the belief in the natural urge of a child towards self-expression. The child is told to let himself go and allowed to think that form will come of itself, form will be produced in the making, or else the subconscious mind, which, like a *Deus ex machina*, governs all things, will produce it from nowhere at all. Here, again, the result seems to belie the truth of the theory, and once again the evidence of the past witnesses heavily against it. One of the chief points in favour of the theory is found in beautiful works of art produced by primitive races, and in the belief that there is a connection between the work of children and the work of primitive peoples. This may be true, but primitive people remain primitive, and children should not re-

main children. Primitive art has a beauty of its own, but it is a lower form of beauty and must be kept in its proper place. It cannot be, and should not be, a source of inspiration either for civilized men or for their children, and although children may conceivably profit by imitating simple forms of primitivism, it should not be presented to them as anything more than a step in their training on the way to a higher end. Children, and modern children at least, should find their inspiration in sources not lower, but higher, than themselves. For this reason also it is a mistake to rave about the beauty of negro women, when the masterpieces of the Greeks and the Italians are in existence. They are nearer to us and higher than we are, and it is to them, if anywhere, that we should turn for inspiration. This does not imply that a certain beauty does not reside in naked negro women, but that a distinction should be made if the higher is not to be confused with the lower, and all to end in a universal flow of indetermination.

As a precedent to the modern monistic cult of 'formless' expression and, in part, its cause, was the 'expressionless' form of the neo-classic eighteenth century when tiresome and monotonous Roman emperors and Greek gods gave some relief to the jaded aristocratic minds of the old

THE CIVILIZED MAN

régime. The fault at that time seems to have been monotony rather than monstrosity, and, on the whole, the greatest products of this period, as we see them in the neo-Greek statues of Thorwaldsen and Canova, are probably of more enduring value than the expressionist and futurist productions of to-day, and this is of itself a piece of evidence in support of the relative superiority of form to expression. Yet, although form is the more important, being the specifically human element in art as compared with natural expression, it is only when both are present in the right proportion that fine art appears. Lastly, we may mention the curious theory advanced by Mr. Clive Bell of 'significant form', in virtue of which he praises the primitive Byzantine and Italian art as a higher production than that of the Renaissance. By his term 'significant form', Mr. Bell really seems to mean primitive expression of the kind we have discussed, and his use of the term in such a connection is hardly justifiable. He seems to allege that, from time to time, a new '*form-gefühl*', or feeling for form, arises in the world, and by his term 'significant form' he seems to mean any new feeling in its first beginnings. Examples are Cimabue and Giotto in the Middle Ages, each of whom broke away from a previous classical

A R T

and conventional series of forms which had become stereotyped. It is true that apparently new creations do appear in art owing to the law of change which governs this sublunar universe, but it is also true that beneath the change there is something which remains constant, and of this Mr. Clive Bell seems to take no cognizance. Yet it is this which is more important than the changes, and on which all emphasis should be laid. Now, with Mr. Clive Bell the stress seems to be laid on the unessential eccentricities which at the outside make artists in different periods appear to be more different than they are. The true form and the highest forms are identical in their dependence on what is the same in all men, the power to 'refrain' in art as well as in life, and it is no more and no less significant in Cimabue than in Michel Angelo, or in Euripides than in Shakespeare. To assert, as Mr. Clive Bell does, that in Cimabue, and in modern times in Cézanne, a new art feeling was born into the world without any explanation, is to hand art, and, for that matter, human life itself, over to that form of accident which in biological spheres is called mutation, and amounts to denying the human will and its power over human development. The facts do not square with Mr. Bell's arrangement of the great art periods, nor with

THE CIVILIZED MAN

his assertion that the primitive age of Cimabue is superior to the Renaissance, of which it was the forerunner. The truth surely is that Giotto, both in form and expression, is inferior to Michel Angelo, and was inferior to him because he was not so civilized a man. On the other hand, Dante, who was a contemporary of Giotto, was a man not inferior to Michel Angelo, and was as civilized as he was, all of which goes to prove that, to attempt a division into hard and fast culture periods, is to attempt a very difficult task, and still more difficult when the periods are regarded as the factors which decide the nature of the man. In the last analysis, while allowing for some influence of environment on men, it is the man who makes the period and not vice versa, and what is called originality, as we see it in Cézanne and Cimabue, is, or should be, a move away from the power of environment to more independent humanity.

A brief sketch of the various periods of art and literature has already been given in a preceding chapter and leaves little more to be said here on the subject. The point we wish now to emphasize is that form remains substantially the same at all times because men remain the same, and the apparent differences in art are really attributable to expression, which is a natural

thing. Under expression not only do we count the objects presented by outer nature, sense-impressions, colours, sounds, etc., but all that part of the human environment for which the artist himself is not responsible. As this includes art traditions, conventions, habits, motifs, it will be obvious that such elements in art as stereotyped forms are really to be read as expression. A Greek, for example, is not responsible for the customs and usages, conventions and habits of his age, any more than a Giotto is responsible for his Christian symbolism,⁵ and although at their time of origin they were forms, and of human origin, for the Greek and for Giotto they were expression and nature. Some one was responsible in the beginning for them, but once passed on they become themselves part of the matter given. The artist, working on the things given to him, plays the civilized human being by re-forming them according to the law of his personality, which, in turn, the higher and more noble it is, will approximate to the sublimity reached by the greatest artists and noticed by the biologist,

⁵ Walther Lippmann (*A Preface to Morals*) argues that in medieval times the artist was given his subject-matter by tradition and society. He had therefore no need to invent the theory of *Art for Art's Sake*.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

Julian Huxley. The costumes, the material used even is different in Greek art and in Italian, and the religion and outlook of the artists had many differences, yet both achieved high art, and an art in which the highest things, the 'forms', are the same.

The problem of artistic periods will also bring up the problem of the various arts, since, at one time, one kind of art, sculpture, or architecture, has been more in favour than others. This is a crucial point and demands careful elucidation before any further advance is made. We must reject, in the first place, the theory that all the arts are equal and that to be a great musician is to be as great as a great painter or sculptor, for, as we have seen, to be a civilized man means to have a sense of values, and unless we are to submit that everything in the world is as good as everything else, we must be prepared to erect certain standards.

The chief aim of this book is to place men, in his most civilized state, at the centre of interest, and to maintain that the pursuits which are peculiarly his, artistic, philosophical and religious, are the human and therefore the highest pursuits. We have said that man was most civilized in the periods to which the name cultured has been given, and although we do not

A R T

maintain that in such periods all men living were civilized, we do hold that in small groups men of the highest human types were then to be found. It does not follow that they were at all times equally active in all the human forms of life, for it is quite possible to be religious without being very artistic, or philosophical without being religious, but in some direction or other men in these periods showed that they were maintaining, on a high level, the human attitude toward life. Now, as regards the artistic pursuits this means, first of all, that they knew which of the arts were the most human and which were less human, and they made no mistake in holding a just balance between them, not allowing the arts which are more expressive and less formal to displace at the centre of interest the more formal human arts of literature and sculpture. This appears most plainly in the art of the Greeks, who may even to-day be accepted as the most exemplary human race, but it might almost equally well be exemplified from any cultural period of the kind we have discussed, such as, for example, the French seventeenth century, or the Age of Elizabeth. For the moment we will confine ourselves to the Greeks and consider their artistic and literary products. The first peculiarity which impresses us is that sculpture and

THE CIVILIZED MAN

tragedy, the human arts *par excellence*, are the typical product of the Greek mind and the other arts, painting, music, architecture, on the whole, for the Greeks are subservient to these. Architecture of a most beautiful, but practical, kind was produced by them, but although they recognized its beauty they denied it the title of a fine or liberal art, and never looked to it for the inspiration which they derived from other arts. The Parthenon itself, marvellous though it is, is a developed form of house, and suitable, as a house should be, for the housing of a human form, and it is the maiden Aphrodite inside the Parthenon, more than the Parthenon, which is the centre of interest on the hill of the Acropolis. In Greek tragedy, music and dancing performed by the chorus played an important part, but it was the death of the hero and the tragic conflict which really lay at the centre, and not the chorus. The fact that Greek drama arose out of a choric dance in no way belies this statement. The Greeks became more civilized as they developed. Not till the later Greek days of decadence in the Hellenistic era did the arts of dancing and music develop into subjects of equal value to those to which they had been subjected at the greatest period, and it is significant to note that it was in decadent days

A R T

that this occurred. It is significant, also, that, whereas in the greatest days the subject of sculpture had been found in the idealized youth of Greece, girls and men between the ages of 18 and 30, later sculpture applied itself to all things without discrimination, and very often not in an idealizing but in a sentimental and realistic sense.

If we turn for a moment to a later age of culture, such as the Elizabethan, we shall find a not dissimilar attitude towards the use of art. In that age, beyond all dispute, it was the tragedy of Shakespeare which held the first place, and although the Elizabethans were so far music lovers that every educated young man was expected to be able to read a madrigal score, and sing to it,⁶ they do not seem to have placed it on a level with the art of the theatre, and although again the age was one of many-sided culture, of art, literature and philosophy combined with military and commercial activity, the sense of the relative values of the arts was never lost to them. This balance was kept till the Puritan movement of the following centuries, with its over-emphasis on a narrow view of religion, led the large majority of the English race into that Puritan prison of 200 years' bondage, of which

⁶ Which is by no means done spontaneously and without effort.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

Matthew Arnold has mournfully spoken. From the musical point of view it will perhaps throw light on the subject of the relative value of the arts to note how constant the culture ages are in keeping music in a subordinate position to the other arts. It is true of the epochs discussed, and it is also true of Dante and the Italian Renaissance, in respect of which we may add that not till their days of decadence did opera flourish among the Italians. It is true also of the French classic age of Racine and Louis XIV. And lastly, the latest age which can be called cultured, that of Goethe and Kant, was again an age of many pursuits, too individual, perhaps, with its protagonists scattered throughout Germany, but, none the less, there too the comparative value of the arts was felt widely and felt strongly.

It seems that the rise of music as a separate and final end in itself has been a development of the last two centuries, and a result of the Romantic movement. Its development in modern times is wellnigh a unique event in the world's history, for while there were currents in ancient literature and art of a late and decadent kind of music definitely recognizable as Romantic, they were too short lived and sporadic to render generalization feasible, and the subsequent fall of the Roman Empire in any case

A R T

brought them to an end. What is characteristic of music is the absorption of the intellectual and rational element in a man into the emotional, and a consequent stress on emotion which is dangerous to the mental calibre of any but the strongest character. It is, moreover, this stress on emotion which increases as we descend from the highest to the lowest forms of music, from the sublime to the purely sentimental, which has given rise very probably to the conception of the artistic temperament, a conception quite alien to any culture epoch that we know of in the past. The Greek tragedians themselves, Aeschylus and Sophocles at least, took a very active part in the military and other activities of the age, while Euripides, in whom a more sedentary retiring character was displayed, was himself reproached for it. Dante himself was very active to his own political vision in the Florentine imbroglio of 1300, and although the life of Shakespeare is not known to us, from what little is known and from what may be drawn from a perusal of his plays, there is no evidence that he had the artistic temperament. Racine was himself 'temperamental' to an extreme, and beneath a decorous exterior intensely emotional, but he knew that emotion, to become ennobled, must be controlled, of which control *Andromaque* and

THE CIVILIZED MAN

Phèdre are the marvellous result. It is characteristic of men of so-called artistic temperament that they cannot get things done owing to the claims made upon them by their own nature, and there is not a great artist in the world's history who could be truly described in this manner. The great musicians themselves would have been insulted by the use of this description, and, as a description, it would indeed not have fitted them. Yet there is no doubt that the popularization of music, and often bad music, and the over-emphasis laid on it, has led in the minds of men to a shifting of emphasis in art from the forming element which corresponds philosophically with the will, to the element of expression which corresponds to unformed raw matter, and that in this respect it represents, and is, a regression from civilization to something which is beneath it.

To a certain extent this fact can be verified in the present condition of the nations of the world and by a comparison of what may be described as musical nations with those that are more or less unmusical. As musical nations our thoughts turn at once to Germany, Austria, Russia and Italy, and as more or less unmusical nations, England, France (Paris excepted), and America. It may be regarded as an extravagant

A R T

hypothesis, in view of the many more immediate reasons which might be quoted, to see a connexion between the love of music and the Great War, but it is worth noting that it was the nations devoted above all to music who, during the conflict, collapsed under the strain, whereas the others survived and continued their national life, crippled perhaps, but otherwise without a break. Most true of Russia, where the cult of music is least artificial than elsewhere, and least true of perhaps Italy. True also of Poland, which alone among the nations could, and did, elect a musician as its President, and which among the nations by common consent contains the largest proportion of artistic temperaments. With regard to Germany, we have a race of similar stock to the English, but which has developed to its own disadvantage in a musical direction and which, typically, in modern times has produced few great men of character and stability.⁷ Bismarck and Frederick the Great are, in the first place, Prussians, which is not the same as German, and, in the second place, they

⁷ I am not endeavouring to prove that because men have character, they are therefore artistic. That would give the English a claim to be artistic. My point is that when a man is artistic, his work will gain by the strength of his character. This seems to be the difference between Shakespeare and Shelley and between *Prometheus Unbound* and *King Lear*.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

are exceptions in German history, where in truth the mailed fist is far from being at home. England, France, and America have a far larger proportion of men of firm character than any of the countries mentioned, and they have lacked publicity in history simply because of their larger number. Last of all, we may add with regard to Russia that before the *débâcle* it was not merely an aristocracy of musicians living largely on their temperament and feeling, but that it has not enjoyed the advantage granted to the nations of the West, of a classical Renaissance. We can add that no country with a strong classical tradition⁸ will ever undergo a Communist Revolution, for if a classical education gives nothing else to those who have it, it gives at least a sound view of human life, a feeling for true proportion, and a strong sense of human justice.

The truth is, and it is towards this truth that we are working, that music in modern times, like architecture in the Middle Ages, is a super-human form of art and because it is superhuman it should not be allowed to assume too high a

⁸ Many of the peculiarities of both Russia and America can be explained by their lack of a classical tradition. The mentality of the modern North American seems to be derived from a fusion of Puritanism and Baconianism, while the Cavalier South, which did to some extent preserve Elizabethan England in America, lost its power in the Civil War.

position in the regard of men. If we enter a medieval cathedral and allow the feeling, half religious, half æsthetic, with which it is imbued, gradually to affect our minds, we become aware, little by little, that man as an individual is but a small thing, and that only in vast groups, as in a choir of men singing or chanting, or as a flock drawn together to render praise to the Creator, can his voice be heard in the universe. And this feeling of the most characteristically medieval kind is a fine feeling, and is paralleled in many other medieval organizations, such as the feudal system itself, in the corporations and the guilds. It is not, however, the finest or highest feeling, because when men are taken together *en masse*, despite a strong element of devotion and intellectual worship, which this particular case includes, they lose their individuality of character and in some measure sink below a level they might attain. What they express is the feeling of a crowd of men together, and what they fail to express to its fullest extent, at least, is the human in the individual himself.

Now it was the work of the Italian Renaissance, from Dante onwards, to break down this group feeling, and all the culture epochs following from the French and English to that of Goethe which occurred in Germany at the end of

THE CIVILIZED MAN

the eighteenth century, bore their ripest fruit as an outcome of an emphasis in the individual rather than on the mass. The fruit they bore, moreover, was invariably among other things, a tragedy of a high order, even as it had been in ancient days, and there is a curious sameness in the view of life which the artists of these epochs produced, a view which we have already called the tragic view of life.

It is the view that the sight of a noble human being in the state of collapse before the conditions of life, is the most marvellous spectacle that the universe provides. Now this view was absent almost entirely throughout the Middle Ages, excepting only in the work of the greatest and last medieval author, Dante, and he, we must remember, lived at the dawn of the Renaissance he himself proclaimed. The great art of the Middle Ages was architecture, which has left its influence visible even on the *Commedia*, and it is not a view of life which allows for human expression, tragic or otherwise. But in modern times the superhuman art is not architecture but music, and it is music which now tends to remove man from the proud central position in which the Renaissance during 500 years had placed him.

But there is a great and fundamental difference between the 'superhuman' art of architecture and that of music, and it is manifest in the

A R T

very different orientations of the feeling on which they both depend. In medieval architecture feeling is aroused in the mass and definitely organized towards a given end, which end is the worship of God, so that over and above the cathedral feeling there is a concept, half intellectual and half intuitive, and on this concept feeling finally rests. The concept, moreover, that over and above man there is something higher, which is an end of feeling, is a noble one and one which works against human presumption, a force of restraint and concentration itself, turning men's thought on to their inner being, not from the point of view of feeling, but of thought and reflection. In medieval times this conception was called 'humilitas', and was held to be a noble thing applied, quite unlike the modern term, solely to a man's relation to God. Now the fact that feelings allow themselves easily to be organized, and that the end of the organization need not necessarily be the medieval humility, has led in modern times, since the Romantic cult of music, to certain dangerous temperamental excesses on the part of modern man, which are of so obvious a kind that they hardly need to be mentioned. They lend themselves in the absence of an international organization of the medieval clerical kind, to organiza-

THE CIVILIZED MAN

tion by any one who is clever enough to organize them, and for whatever end he proposes to use them for. Were it otherwise it would be difficult to explain the vogue of popular songs of the music hall variety which so speedily become popular in all parts of the earth, and what is worse than the music hall song, the national anthem or war song of the more violent kind. These too have a purpose behind them, whether commercial or political, but it is not so much a purpose of the intellectual and restraining medieval kind, as a purpose which is itself feeling and aims at emotional identification between subjects of a state and a state itself, tending to the glorification of both. The fact that feelings of this kind are liable to change rapidly, owing to their lack of an intellectual basis and that the feeling so organized is not organized for long, does not effect its value or disvalue for a momentary end, and as the modern world tends to live on its feelings of the moment, whole societies of men so organized are left open to a serious chance of collapse, of the kind we have already noticed in Russia and other countries. In any case, under the influence of music, and this no one who has seen a German opera house will deny, the will of man is definitely weakened, his feelings excited, and a group feeling aroused,

A R T

which is anything but rational and restraining, and which, finally, cannot but detract from the dignity of the human race. Unlike the medieval feeling, which endured for 700 years, and which still endures, and which was dedicated, we might almost say, *ad majorem gloriam Dei*, this modern feeling is directed too often towards nothing but the skill with which feeling has been aroused. For men who are accustomed to this sort of feeling, shifting from composer to composer, and rarely remaining faithful to the elements which are constant in life, the true purpose of feeling easily becomes obscured, and the way is open to any new feelings which may serve for the moment the end of some man who wishes to rouse it.

After this long preamble it may be well to state succinctly what is the upshot of this belief in an artistic scale of values. The upshot is namely that of the arts, those that concern themselves with the human, and which give direct expression to individual character are the finest and noblest of all. Now character includes will and intellect as well as emotion, form as well as expression, and it is when the will provides the driving force of some ideal formed by the intellect, and checks or restrains the emotions in their natural expansive movement that human character is shown at its noblest level. This can

THE CIVILIZED MAN

be done in the mass as well as in the individual, as we have seen in the case of the medieval cathedral, but it is in the case of the individual that its highest level is seen. The two arts which can achieve this best of all, are tragedy among the literary arts and sculpture in plastic art, and both are human as compared with the architecture and music which we have considered. If human freedom rests on a proper relation between the individual and the group, with due stress on the individual, it may be said with some truth that only in ages when sculpture and tragedy have flourished has this freedom been a fact, and it is only necessary to glance even cursorily at the pages of history to realize how far this is true. Human freedom began with the Greeks in the eighth century B.C. and is bound up with a high degree of culture. Before that time individual freedom was hardly known, for we know now how little veracity resides in the theory of the free and noble savage, and how hidebound and circumscribed primitive civilization can be. In the ritualistic civilizations of Babylon and the Aztecs, men were treated as a subordinate to a cosmic whole in so intimate a manner that practically no scope was left for the individual at all. To return, however, to more modern times, we may say that, since the Greek

A R T

decadence, there have been several Renaissances of this same freedom, beginning with the thirteenth century with Dante and his *Comedy*, which breathed humanity into a cathedral-like structure of life, and lasting till the age of Goethe and his *Faust*, and each of them has been in very truth a reconstruction of the same ideal. With the nineteenth-century movement of Romanticism, and concurrently with it the rise of modern science and modern industrialism, the wheel seems to have come full circle and the individual again to be submerged. On the emotional side we have already noted the modern cult of music as one token of this, and if, as it is said, architecture of the skyscraper or railway-station variety is the art of modern America, this may well be another token. In two of the world's most modern states, and the states moreover of the future, America and Bolshevik Russia,⁹ men are ceasing to be looked upon as individuals and as ends in themselves, but as units in a very efficient and brilliant machine. They are carefully brought up to think alike, and, what is even more important, to feel alike, and eccentricities of thought and behaviour, whether based on rational grounds

⁹ Some qualification should be made in both cases, of course. There is a 'humanist' movement in America.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

or not, are looked upon with suspicion and derision, if not with something more sinister than these. So the world sinks, without being aware of it, from Plato and Thomas Aquinas to Dewey and Freud, and civilized man to the uncivilized.

It remains as our last and most important task to state in what way the two arts, tragedy and sculpture, represent the characteristically human outlook on life and why we hold them to be the highest manifestations of the human spirit. Whether the arguments put forward will convince many people is doubtful, and I must confess that I have no proofs for the thesis advanced. To describe it fully would itself demand volumes, and I will therefore content myself with asking the reader for sympathy and with the demand for an effort of appreciation on his part. Tragedy in its purest forms represents the tragic hero in conflict with forces which are hostile to himself and to which ultimately he succumbs. He succumbs in tragedy for a-priori reasons and never in any case overcomes what is hostile to him, for, if he did so, the result would not be tragic, and in the old sense of the word, would be a comedy. Now the tragic ending, as seen in innumerable tragic conflicts throughout all ages for reasons which cannot be explained (*'omnia exeunt in mysterium'* is the only devise

A R T

for this) attains a height of sublimity which no human happiness or human happy ending can ever attain, and of which the solution is a mystery which lies at the root of creation. Expressed philosophically, it means that the conflict of form and matter, will and flesh, ends when raised to its highest point, to which it seems to be raised in human tragedy, not in harmony and in the '*coincidentia oppositorum*' of the pantheists, but in disharmony and in ruin, but that at the same time, out of this disharmony, there arises also a strange and noble feeling, recognized by common consent of the age as being the noblest feeling to which human beings can rise. Moreover, it is in the case of individual human beings endowed with free will and in conflict with opposing forces, that the highest level of this feeling is reached, and only in purely human ages can this be attained. What the feeling is which arises from the conflict will be discussed in the following chapter, but a few examples will be given here to indicate what is meant by this. The forming element in the human being is the will, whether weak or strong, and this will must be, and is, in all true tragedy, held to be free and able, to a greater or less extent to decide what the individual will do. A glance at the

THE CIVILIZED MAN

surviving so-called fate dramas, such as the Oedipus Rex, will show clearly that this is so. Of Oedipus Rex¹⁰ it was prophesied that he would slay his father and marry his mother, and in order to avoid this destiny and indeed largely by reason of his efforts, Oedipus did both of these things. It would seem that, for a man under such a fatality as Oedipus, and who was in some doubt, as Oedipus was, concerning the whereabouts of his father and mother, the only way to be sure of living without sin would be neither to slay anyone, nor to marry anyone at all. Now Oedipus both slew a man and married a woman, although he did not in the least suspect whom he was slaying nor whom he was marrying. In the case of the slaughter at the place where three roads meet, Oedipus erred in actually the very direction which has been stigmatized as being inhuman, in 'letting himself go' and in letting his evil passion work its will, thus acting inhumanly, in animal fashion. It was precisely in this act, above all, that nature triumphed over man, expression over form, and flesh over the will, and it is the one act which later he regretted more than any other. Yet, in the ordinary sense of the word, he acted quite

¹⁰ *v.* my article, 'Humanism and Tragedy', in the *Nineteenth Century*, July 1929.

freely throughout his life, never felt any of his individual actions to have been directed by the hand of fate, and only when all was over and the worst accomplished, did he see or think he saw the hand of destiny and the gods. As most men when looking back have this feeling, it cannot be said that it is a peculiarity of this so-called fate drama, and Oedipus during his life would not deny that within the ordinary limits of human life he did, not only what he wanted to do, and very successfully withal, but even the two things he did not want to do, quite freely and unrestrainedly. What is important for our thesis is that his sin was that of doing rather than of refraining from doing, and it has been made clear that the will we call human is a negative and not a positive power, a will not to do but to refrain at the right moment from doing. Now such fate tragedies as we see in the German *Schicksals-tragödien*, which tend to make their heroes puppets, are invariably failures as tragedies for the reason that the tragic feeling depends primarily on the freedom of the human will and consequent reaction on its part. Other and greater fate tragedies, such as the *Phèdre* and *Athalie* of Racine, where fatality plays a prominent part, will show when analysed the same truth. What brings *Phèdre* to her ruin is not so

THE CIVILIZED MAN

much Jansenist belief in fatality, as her own freedom of will, even though freedom is manifested as weakness, and because the will is weak, it does not follow that it is determined. According as the will is strong or weak, it will be less or more dependent on circumstances, but its freedom remains, none the less, unimpaired, and in the struggle between the higher will and the world of inimical nature which it has to overcome lies the full and marvellous effect of human tragedy.

And with this subject of tragedy sculpture in its highest manifestation, as seen, for example, in the works of Phidias and Michel Angelo, has a most intimate connection, since it no less than the drama expresses the same tragic feeling, which is the highest feeling in the world. No better example of this could be given than the famous cavalry riders who, even to-day, ride so slowly and serenely in the procession on the frieze of the Parthenon, with perfect form united to perfect expression. For this expression, as for the Greek view of life generally, the term serenity has been used, and Walter Pater, in his famous essay on Winckelmann, has made much of the *Heiterkeit* or cheerfulness in the faces, whether gods or men, as though with this term that expression were fully described. But too much has been made of the serenity of the

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Greeks and too much of their hedonism and love of pure beauty. The truth is rather that they were not different from men of other epochs in this matter of serenity, and when examined there is a touch of something less serene which lies behind. The serenity of the Greeks is not joy or cheerfulness, but something which is more than joy and more than cheerfulness. It is the expression of men who have seen the worst and are not afraid, and for whom the world has nothing more to teach. It is an expression of peace, the state of mind of men in whom will has triumphed over matter, and in whom the ideal human being, artistically and as an ideal portrayed, has come into being. This state of mind was not so intense among the Greeks as it became among the Christians, for reasons we have already given, but they had it sufficiently for us to feel it even to-day. There is in their serenity the same peace which comes at the end of tragedy and which is the peace for which civilized men yearn. The peace of Iras, who says to her mistress when all is over:

‘Finish, good lady, for the bright day is done
And we are for the dark,’

or of Crito, who remarked to Socrates as the night fell which meant for him the end:

‘I think, Socrates, the sun is still upon the mountains and has not yet set.’

V

RELIGION

THE argument for a divine purpose of the universe rests partly on the metaphysical belief that there is a power behind the universe and partly on the belief that this power is something similar to, if incomparably higher than, that which is highest in man. Now since the highest thing in man is human character formed by the will, the argument ventures to affirm that the power behind the universe partakes of the nature of character, and that the hope expressed by Paul, of seeing God 'face to face', is the hope of a contact with the personality or character of God. Such a hope is admittedly anthropomorphic in a limited sense, but it is not anthropomorphic in the cruder sense denounced of old by Xenophanes:

'If cattle or lions could make statues, they would represent the gods as cattle or lions,'

if only because it places the animal part of man over against the divine and asserts that God is

RELIGION

not flesh, but will. A contact of the kind we mean was symbolized mystically by Dante under the image of a point of light, by virtue of which all creation moves, and in this intuition of deity Dante asserted what all mystics have asserted, and what I wish here to assert, the possibility of personal intercommunication with God. We have admitted that a certain element of anthropomorphism enters into all human speculation as surely as the flesh and the will are found together in man, and if we try to eliminate it we reject the very foundation on which human life rests. For a power behind the universe which is nothing more and nothing less than a purely metaphysical concept can satisfy only the demands of what I have called the series of truth, and gives no clue to the ethical series which seems to pervade the whole fabric of the world we call human. And since everything which we feel to be sublime in the works of men demands as its *raison d'être* both these series in conflict, it follows that the power beyond all things must also in some way be adequate to 'explain' this demand, and consequently give evidence of both will and of character of an absolute kind.

The empirical evidence for the belief in such a power of an ethical kind is as universal and

THE CIVILIZED MAN

omnitemporal as the human race itself, and all human voices join to proclaim it. Even as regards epochs of the less cultural kind and in days when individual civilized men hardly seem to have existed, there is evidence that the whole fabric of life, as we see it¹ in the ritual cultures of Babylon and Mexico, to quote two well-known examples, revolved round the worship and service of a god, and that this worship was far more than a mere sub-human reaction to the physical needs of man. Over and above the physical human needs there was also an element which is inexplicable on purely economic lines and which can only be explained on an ethical basis of dualism. And since this is true of all parts of the world where the ritual system prevailed, it must be accepted as a portion of the common human experience which is the basis of the argument of this book. On it in part we base our belief in a power behind all things, and we find in it the seed, if not the fruition, of the belief in a divine character. With the growth to maturity² of man in the culture ages and with the evolution

¹ Christopher Dawson, *Progress and Religion*.

² There is growth within man's experience. But the savage is not fundamentally different from a civilized man. He has the same possibilities.

RELIGION

of the civilized man, the second element in the argument, the personal God Himself appears, together with innumerable forms of definite belief in Him.

Now just as in man we have already distinguished the part which is determined, called nature, and the part which is not determined, called will, so also we read into the universe itself the same two elements. Just as in man the part which is properly human is that part which acts as a control over the other, so we read into the universe, in addition to the natural part which so plainly and so terrifyingly we see before our eyes,

le silence éternel de ses espaces infinis,

a final will which, like the will of man, can control and direct the nature which is so terrible. Just as there is in man a personality created by the will and able to restrain matter, so also in the world there is a higher will, not so unlike our own that we cannot conceive it, nor so much greater that it cannot be understood. This dualism of the universe corresponding to dualism in man is an old theory which has stood the test of years. Although it is not plainly and definitely writ down in Plato and the Greeks it lies implicitly in their doc-

THE CIVILIZED MAN

trine, and both in the myths of Plato and in the world scheme of Aristotle it is present. Plato tells us that God (or the Demiurge) made the world out of Pure Reason and out of Necessity, and thus according to him there was an underlying substratum of necessity in the make-up of this universe which not even the wisdom of God could overcome, and which, substantially, is the Platonic explanation of evil. Similarly in Aristotle we find a latent dualism whereby the presence of evil and imperfect things in the world is explained away by virtue of a certain resistance set up by 'raw matter' to the principle which 'informs' it. Yet no more than in the case of man, whose freedom we have shown to be both real and negative, does this necessity, moulded by God as man moulds his own nature, impeach the freedom which is the freedom of God himself. For unless there be something for will to mould, something which may provide the conflict, will is working on nothing and has no means of expressing or of even recognizing itself. The will of God, therefore, as we know it in this universe, is a force and limitary means of control, and has itself no positive content. To give it omnipotence, therefore, to which there is no resistance, and to remove all obstacles from before it,

RELIGION

as it were at a blast of His mouth, were to take its field of action from it, and to leave nothing but a void and empty universe. To give omnipotence *meaning*, and by that I mean a meaning for human beings, there must be something for it to act on. As an example I will quote the sublime poetry of the Hebrew myth of creation, mentioned long ago by Longinus³ as a supreme example of the sublime. There, in *theory*, the world is created from nothing, but, in *fact*, from darkness, and we feel when reading it how deep darkness can be, and how real its resistance to light.

And God said, Let there be light.
And there was light.

A statement the sublimity of which actually depends on the reader's conviction of the enormity of the task which omnipotence carried out and the goodness and beauty of the result. It is this will which is God's forming capacity, and consequently it is the will of God which gives form and aim and purpose to the universe, just as it is the will of man which gives man a form and purpose. In our littleness, like Job, we do not know what this aim is, but no less like him we have a feeling that it is there, and we have it, not because of the realm of science

³ In his book *On the Sublime*,

THE CIVILIZED MAN

(truth) but of the realm of values, because of the dualism which present itself everywhere. Without this 'form' of God somewhere in the universe we should not be able to explain form in man, knowing as we do that from nature it does not come, and being faced with the dilemma that since it does not come from below it must either come from above or from nowhere.

We admit that it is difficult to reconcile this dualism in the universe and this 'form-will' to which the name God has been given with the divine omnipotence as it is upheld by the various systems, and with the monism which reason would see behind all things. Whether this theory of the will controlling matter which demands a substratum of nature to work upon will satisfy the sceptic is perhaps unlikely, and the only argument for it, since it is admittedly not logical, is, as we shall try to prove shortly, that it fits in with the facts of life as no other argument does. Omnipotence in this sense means complete power to control nature and guide it to an end. How far it also means power for the will to create nature I am not prepared, and indeed am quite unable, to say. By my own argument will itself would be meaningless without nature, and I feel therefore tempted to add that God Himself, as an

RELIGION

explanation of the sublimity of this world, would be also meaningless without it. Nor do I think that I am weakening the idea of God by imagining Him as the circumscribing element of the world, if only because I feel that the world when circumscribed (but not when left to itself) is a marvellous thing and divine also. For as the old Hebrews were wont to say, and as Spinoza more recently said, the world is itself the body of the deity and the symbol of an infinity beyond. Or again, in the words of Goethe, the world may be regarded as the living garment of the deity.

'Ich wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid'.

But I do feel intensely that of the elements form and matter, character and nature, it is the first that is *real*,⁴ and that in the last analysis, which it is beyond my power to make, *God is One and One alone*. For in the end, as the philosopher said of old, *'omnia exeunt in mysterium'*, and this final One, the true and mystic monism, can only be apprehended by intuition, or mystically by a select few, and it remains for ever inaccessible to reason. But if not an answer, some sort of explanation can

⁴ Monism is the final explanation, but not the *naturalistic* monism which I have attacked.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

be given, and this we can give from human experience.

We have already tried to show how deeply, and to what extent, both in art and philosophy, human ideals are affected by the dualism which is inherent in the works of man, and have even maintained that everything which is worth while in human affairs seems to depend on it. We have also said that since the age of the last great humanist philosopher, Goethe, the trend of thought has been towards monism, not of the final 'mysterious' kind, but of an immediate kind which confuses the scientific and ethical plane, and which tends towards the equating of man and the material universe, culminating at the present day in the expressionist philosophies of Bertrand Russell, Bernard Shaw⁵ and many others. Now a monist system of philosophy renders the construction of a system of ethics impossible, simply because ethics depends on dualism and on a scale of values which monism, by its levelling tendencies, cannot and does not supply. We need hardly add that the deficiencies of modern philosophy, in view of its own disintegrating effect on religious

⁵ Montgomery Belgion, in *Our Present Philosophy of Life*, has dealt petulantly, it must be confessed, with these. But he would seem to be right!

RELIGION

beliefs throughout the civilized world have been widely felt, and various efforts have been made to remedy its shortcomings, some details of which have been given in the chapter on philosophy. As a summary, however, it may be said that the thinking population of the world can be divided roughly into those who still hold to the established religions and their ethical systems, those who, like Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell, Professors Whitehead, Alexander, etc., endeavour to build up an ethical system on the basis of modern science, and lastly those who, like the American humanists Irving Babbitt, Brownell and Lippmann, are trying to carry on in a modified form the Aristotelian tradition of the Nicomachean Ethics, with added weight and dignity from its similarity to the ethical system of the great Chinese philosopher Confucius. Of these three divisions the first is still by far the most numerous, the second may be said in general to be under the unfortunate necessity of shifting their position every time science shifts its position, whereas the third represents a reaction against science and its achievements in that part of the world where the scientific life holds most power over the minds of men, to wit, America. As the beliefs of religion do not differ from

THE CIVILIZED MAN

those of the humanists in any fundamental way, our chief interest will naturally be in the third, and it is the position of the third which in many ways is substantially that of this book.

The last of the humanists mentioned, Walther Lippmann, holds that the religious attitude of the Hebrew and medieval kind is now untenable, and moreover was only possible in a society accustomed to royal or imperial rule. Men to-day, and, of course, American men in particular, cannot believe in an almighty God of an oriental kind any more than they can believe in the more constitutional God of the English deistic eighteenth century, and the only source of ethics valid to-day is the human source with its peers in Aristotle, Confucius, Spinoza, etc. Lippmann would base his ethics on the Confucian formula that since the world will not conform to the desire of the individual, the latter must conform to the world. He feels that the world now is changing so fast that the maintenance of any form of tradition is not only impossible, but if it were possible would even be detrimental to man, and would prevent him from adapting himself with sufficient rapidity to the constant flux which now goes on about him. Man, according to

RELIGION

Lippmann, must place before himself the ideal of Confucius and Aristotle, and the norm for this ideal is human maturity. Man must grow up and be no longer a child, for the grown-up man, like Job and like Spinoza, realizes that the world is there to be endured and not to satisfy his desires. Lippmann consequently urges disinterestedness as the virtue of the mature man and his ethics consists in this ideal. The difficulty is that such a doctrine, by its emphasis on the eternal flow which the world presents and its advocacy of assimilation to it, seems to lead towards passivity and quiescence on the part of man, and certainly under-estimates the sameness lying behind the flux, and we might add, in part responsible for it. For although the social structure of human society is to-day enormously influenced by machines and the technology which arises out of machines, it is surely wrong to assert, as Lippmann does, that science and scientific discovery now proceed of their own momentum, that, as it were, invention goes on by itself without active human effort behind. If a prophet arose in America with sufficient character and determined will, the whole structure of America could be changed by him as surely as the whole structure of Russia, in one decade, has been revolutionized from top to

THE CIVILIZED MAN

bottom by Lenin and the fanatics who believed in him. And this belief of man in man, as we shall see presently, is the strength of ethics and something which no development in machines can either bend or break.

More important than Lippmann and, I think, more accurate from the ethical point of view, is the humanistic outlook of the American, Irving Babbitt. In his book *Democracy and Leadership* Babbitt goes right to the root of the problem of ethics by pointing out the importance of the influence of human character in the movements of history, over and above what the psychologists have called the influence of heredity and environment. The truth is that ethics do not depend on human thought and human logic for their influence, but on the will and character of the man who creates them and of the group of men who help him to carry them into practice. Behind the 'magnanimous man' of Aristotle, and as the source of it, stands some man or men of Aristotle's epoch who was the model for it, and we may add also the character of Aristotle himself. Behind the human ideal of Plato lies Socrates, the force of whose character is still felt to-day, and who very probably influenced Aristotle also. The Stoic philosophy, and for that

RELIGION

matter the Epicurean too, likewise depended upon character more than logic, and those to-day who feel the power of Stoicism feel it not through its logic but through the personality of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus. In ancient time we know that Cato was regarded as the Stoic saint, and it is the figure of Cato and the power of his death in Utica rather than the Stoic logic which impelled Dante to place him as guardian to the Christian purgatory, and to save him, in medieval days, from the limbo of the heathen lost. Even to-day, in so far as men act ethically and towards some end which is not merely that of becoming rich, they do it because of the influence on them of other men, whether it be their parents, their teachers, pastors, friends, or some men they have read or heard about, and for this very reason our complicated society, in spite of the influence of monistic philosophy, is still under the spell of the past, and sects or religions founded centuries ago still find innumerable adherents. In this sense men such as Aristotle, Plato, Spinoza, and still more so Paul, Augustine, Luther, are very much alive to-day and likely to go on being alive for centuries to come. They are the ideals by which the law of imitation works, and it is because of their personality more than

THE CIVILIZED MAN

any logic they possessed which caused and even now causes men to follow them and to believe fervently that they were right in spite of any arguments to the contrary. Personality of this higher kind is man at his furthest remove from nature, and those who imitate it are furthest removed from the imitating of nature. And if the question is put, whom then did these imitate? the answer is that since their inspiration did not come from below it must have come from above, and that once more, therefore, we feel that a source there must be somewhere.

But before seeking this source it is important to mark out the sphere of art and to show what its function is in the work of imitation which seems to be the great work of man. Now the answer is namely this, that art in its true sense is *the speech or means of communication of personality to personality, character to character*, and that whether it be Shakespeare who speaks through his medium of printed words, Phidias and Michel Angelo, through the marble of their statues, or a man speaking to us to-day, the aim and result is invariably the same, to present the highest vision of human destiny to us and to give it as a source of imitation to raise us to the same height. Without art

RELIGION

this could not be done and without art there would not only be no highest model for our imitation, but there would be no means of knowing it if there was. The Socrates of Pláto, the Zeus of Phidias, the Christ of the Gospels could never have been transmitted down the centuries but for the ethical ideal posited by art, and what is more could never even have arisen in the minds of the writers themselves. And so finally it is the dialogues of Plato which keep Socrates alive for us, and it is in the work of Dante, of Shakespeare, of Goethe on the one hand, of Phidias, of Michel Angelo, of Donatello on the other, that we find ourselves face to face with the highest human ideals which men have been able to portray.

And when we are contemplating these works and, as it were, absorbing them, *we are actually doing the greatest thing that man can do*, namely, raising our personality to a higher level by an act of imitation, and the very fact that this may sometimes take us years to perform, indicates that we are manifesting in a noble sense the virtue of 'humilitas'. For we are admitting, tacitly, but none the less sincerely, that ours is a lower personality and that we must raise it to the level of a higher, and because we recognize that the universe contains this scale of values, we

THE CIVILIZED MAN

are also recognizing a limit of values and denying the monistic scheme of the world. In this functioning, speech, poetry, painting, sculpture, music are the same, and on the highest level are expressing nothing less than the purpose of life itself. They show, one and all, human life in conflict with nature, and although it is ruin and catastrophe which they portray, as we have shown in the case of the tragic drama, they evoke in us something that lies beyond ruin and which is the true monism, peace itself.

In conclusion, before treating of the question of the divine humility, the position may be made more clear by showing in the case of the tragic drama, the most human of the arts, how *humilis* the tragic hero himself can be shown to be. To return for a moment to our original examples, we can see this even in the awful figure of Macbeth, who in truth may be said to have begun by a show of arrogance, but who ends in the most abject humility. For after setting forth, as he did, 'to wade through horror to a throne', he was in the end startled to find how difficult it is for man to play the beast, and was overwhelmed by the vision of ethical wrong which loomed up so monstrously before him. So difficult, in fact, it was in his case, that his spirit broke in the conflict, and his glory turned

RELIGION

to ashes at his feet. Oedipus, too, is far from arrogance, and has also before him the vision of an ideal life, a vision of a life unstained, in which there should be no patricide and no incest, but the gods had willed it otherwise, and it could not be. Now in so far as these and such as these have their purpose turned towards an ideal above themselves, they are *humilis* and they are civilized in the sense I give to the word. But even more than this, because they sooner or later defer to a higher ideal, they are presupposing a limit and are on the way to the medieval and Hebrew humility which saw right through to the end and which was prepared, when occasion demanded it, to play the civilized man and to say with perfect submission,

ruat caelum, fiat voluntas Tua.

For between these human lives of Oedipus and Macbeth and the religious life of complete submission there is only a difference of emphasis, not one of kind, and the basis of both is the same. There is a 'limit' somewhere and man has fallen short of it, a righteousness which has been infringed and which to infringe is a deed of horror. For rationally and on all arguments drawn from naturalistic monism Oedipus could have argued that fate had meant him to do what he

THE CIVILIZED MAN

did, and since fate (or the gods) had forced his hands he was under no ban of sin. But he did not argue so, and he knew that his hand was not forced. He feels that the gods themselves condemn him and that he in their eyes is an accursed being. His will and the will of the universe are out of joint with each other, and life for him had gone awry. Two series of events, the series he held to be the right one, and the series which nature had ordained, have crossed each other, and the crossing has brought him to ruin. And the other, Macbeth, is in like condition, and despite the subtle outlook of the Renaissance, is caught in the same net. Now the greatest mistake Oedipus made was when he acted with violence, and out of sheer animal fury slew five men at the place where three roads meet. Not otherwise Macbeth, who slew with violence also and who, finding that once having begun he cannot stop, continues to slay till the end. And the end is this. He finds himself, baffled, disappointed, dismayed.

‘And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death.’

These are examples of human wills conscious of having failed to reach the aim, and who depart chanting a swan-song of human weakness. ‘Hateful am I to the gods’ is Oedipus’ last

RELIGION

word, and Macbeth, drinking the lees of life, retreats like a poor player. But what they have done is this, and it is the mystery which lies behind tragedy. They have failed in their animal life, because they could not bear it. But they have shown that there is another, one hard to achieve, yet one in which even they, with all their violence, came in the end to believe. Nor are they, because they have failed, ignoble. The world is so made that men fail, but the greatness lies in the conflict, and no man ever born has failed to see the greatness in human tragedy.

Now the problem which arises out of tragedy and the tragic collapse is one of the will and is an empirical fact of human psychology, so evident that no one who can appreciate what tragedy means will deny it. What the tragic hero loses is that which the will is aiming at, namely, human peace of mind, and it is the peace which arises from the triumph of will over nature, the only peace which matters and which can endure. In the tragic drama this peace is the background of the conflict and is felt by the spectator to be there. It is not felt by the hero, unless, after the conflict is over, a short space is given him before he passes away, and the reason is that the hero, although he falls by his own fault, is also a victim and to some extent a sacrifice. For in the true

THE CIVILIZED MAN

tragic hero there is an element of the universal man in conflict with the entire fabric of the universe,⁶ and because in his struggle he rises to the highest human level, he is felt by the spectator to be a representative of the whole human race, collapsing inevitably in the struggle because the struggle is gigantic and beyond his power. And also because he is on the highest human level, and ends by condemning the animal in him, there arises the curious sense of satisfaction, not to say optimism, with which tragedy, in spite of its fear and terror, is fraught. Although victory is not there, there is a promise of it and out of the promise comes the feeling of peace, experienced by the spectator at the end, and felt by him to be near to the religious plane.

But the peace in tragedy is not perfect, because man's will is not perfect, but it is on the way to perfection and full of its promise. For to possess a perfect will would mean the power of so controlling instinct and desire that under any provocation whatsoever the animal in man ceases to exist at all, and the result 'perfect peace' be attained. Such a power of will would be the limit of which we have spoken and would be the will of the being we have called God. It would be a triumph of the will over nature, of form

⁶ It may be that the biological 'struggle for life' has some connexion with this conflict.

RELIGION

over matter, so complete and so perfect that no forming or willing more at all would remain to be performed. The result would be a perfect state, the 'peace which passeth understanding', the peace and serenity which is of God. Now in human history we have an exemplar of this, and it is to be found in the event of the crucifixion of Christ. Here the conditions are given and the power is shown to be, so that in this one event there would seem to lie the answer to the riddle of the universe.

For here is a human being of a noble and forbearing kind, yet who, like other men, is quick to anger and prepared on occasion to drive his enemies from him. Here is one who can be reproachful and yet full of love, quick in thought too and yet ignorant, as men are apt to be, of many things. The life he lived throughout his youth and early manhood was not unlike others of his race, and as a parallel to it others could be cited, so that but for the manner of his death his perfection might hardly have been known. But at a certain point in his life he felt himself called to a mission and proclaimed the Kingdom of God. After three years' work in his narrow country he met his death on the Cross, told with incomparable beauty in the Gospels, and thus leaving behind him a personal influence which was to have untold effects on the future of the world.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

Now the details of the passion are so illustrative of our argument that they are worth following closely and from beginning to end. In the first place it must be noticed that Christ does not do things, but remains largely passive, allowing men, and very angry men, moreover, to do things to him. He is no superman of the Nietzschean kind with a terrible will to do, but a man with a will to refrain and to let others do unto him. Nor, on the other hand, is he a busybody, or an uplifter, and he is content in great measure to let the series of nature be, to 'render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's' and to leave behind him, not compulsory laws of behaviour, but the influence of his own character and personality, as a model for human imitation.

For he is taken and spat upon, flogged and derided, sold and deserted, and under such conditions, when the most saintly of men would retaliate, he calmly endures it all. When others would fight for him he restrains them and while believing that at a word from himself legions of angels would hasten to his side, he does not summon them, but stands alone, and lets be. His answers when questioned are not provocative, and he seems to let the world have its way and to do with him what it will. Yet it is not the world which has its way, and we are

RELIGION

aware even when reading the story after nineteen centuries that the source of power is in him and not in the world. For while the world waxes more angry it is he who remains ever calm, and who seems in face of condemnation to be triumphant. Those who question him, when they are not angry or disappointed, are slightly puzzled, and find something in him to admire. Both the Roman governor and Herod are a little abashed, for they have not encountered one such as he before, and neither of them is able to find the fault they are seeking. They too are not men of evil, and it is characteristic of the gospel story that nobody in it is painted in really dark colours, not even the traitor Judas himself. Those who wrote are not vindictive against the men who slew their lord and with classical objectivity they give the facts of the case, yet showing all the time that they hold it to be the greatest crime in history. Their master is tried and condemned by the Roman court, and must die the Roman death. Outside the mob is howling, as all mobs howl, reverting to the nature which is below. Inside, one who is at the other limit and who comes from above. Nature and the supreme will are in conflict and the deepest tragedy in process. Such are the data of the greatest event in history.

THE CIVILIZED MAN

Finally, he is nailed to the Cross after the manner of Roman punishment, and, according to one account, between two malefactors, one on either side. He remains conscious for a while and even speaks to the men about him, reproducing in one of them, by force of example, the image of himself. 'To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' There is a time when he is like a human being, weak, as when with pain in his limbs he cries out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But this passes, and the will remains. For above all, in face of the deriding mob, just before he dies, the will which seems to us divine rises to its highest level and reaches the absolute pitch. He does not revile, nor weep in distress, nor curse in resentment, all of which would be perfect natural reactions, but in the teeth of the animal let loose, he says simply, with divine magnanimity:

'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,' in one phrase betraying his perfect non-resentment and the sense of the service which is the end of mankind.

Now out of this story, on every feature of which the deepest sincerity is written, various salient facts arise, which it will be well for us to consider. First of all, there is the dualism which Christ sees in the world and the conflict of good

RELIGION

and evil which he faces without flinching. He does not proclaim universal goodness nor universal love, nor deny the evil which has been done and which is in the mind of the howling mob. He knows that there is evil in the world and unspeakable evil, but he knows also that only one thing can control it, the will which sets on end. He is far from being the 'gentle Jesus, meek and mild' which a more sentimental age has read into him, and equally far from being the stern world-judge of the Calvinists, and while he is ready to turn the other cheek, he is at the same time aware that evil is being done. Secondly, he is conscious throughout of carrying out a task which must at all costs be fulfilled, and which is in truth the centre of the action, the purpose which lies behind the horror and ghastliness of the passion. He is not doing this because of his own desire, but at the desire of another⁷, because somewhere in the universe there is a supreme fiat and this fiat must be performed. Before the crucifixion took place he is said to have knelt and prayed that 'this cup be taken away from me', and then—the will prevailing—to have added, 'But thy will, not my will, be done.' Thus he defers to the will of an

⁷ The idea was present in Greek thought. Plato argued that a man must remain at his post because the gods have placed him there (*Phaedo*).

THE CIVILIZED MAN

Other and to the liminary fiat of God. *Now here there lies a mystery, and it is this. When he died his will was perfect and itself the limit of restraint. He, therefore, had a will like the will of God and was himself the Other to whom his will deferred.*

Lastly, there is the intense feeling of the inevitableness of this event and of its central position among the events of the world. By this is not meant only the dogmatic belief that Christ atoned for the sins of men, but something which perhaps goes even beyond that. It has been shown in Greek art and tragedy that there, also, an absolute feeling is reached, something experienced there which is felt to be fundamental in the universe, echoing the tragedy lying at the foundation of the world. And now here, in the passion of Christ, we experience the same feeling intensified to the highest degree and played not only on the human plane but on the plane of the absolute itself, and unique according to the Jewish and true interpretation of history. For here is something occurring which will have a meaning for all time to come, which has had a meaning in all time past and which yet has occurred only once. Here is something which is inconceivably awful, yet ineffably sublime, something for which the world was made, something which is the *sine quâ non* of the universe,

RELIGION

and which not merely stands for but is, in truth, its deepest meaning.

And if it be possible to use the term after it has been put to so many baser uses, I would say that Christ as a human being is the example of the *supremely civilized* man, the man furthest removed from the animal and on the edge of divinity. On the human side he is exemplary because he is subject to all the human wants and desires, thirst and fear, indignation and ignorance, and no man exists but is subject to them likewise. But where he rises so high and so far above, and when he touches the divine is in his perfect control in deference to the will that is on high. Of all the human weaknesses it was his will and his achievement to remain in control to the end. For in the end the flesh perishes and vanishes away, but the will which is controlling and which has no perishable part, remains. If ever a will remained to the end, then it was the will of Christ, and if in the resurrection we see a will which still is manifest it is this surely, and like Paul we have good reason to say, 'Till now all creation has been in travail,' and like him we can believe that this event was the culmination of the movement of the world. Since this there is no progress and round this the world revolves.

Now, as in the case of tragedy and of all fine

THE CIVILIZED MAN

art, the effect on the spectator is not one so much of sorrow or regret or fear, albeit all these come into it, but a feeling which can only be called peace and which is the noblest feeling which man in his human life can experience. According as art or literature is able to leave us with this feeling it is high art or high literature, and it appertains to the peace which is the purpose of the world. As Christ died, it is said that the words fell from his lips:

‘It is finished’

and at that moment he must have experienced the peace towards which his will was working and to which human will should work. Peace is the mental state of those whose will has withstood nature and triumphed over it, and who within themselves have achieved serenity. They who have done this are the lords of the world, and like Christ they can become examples and models to others. For they are ‘civilized’ men who have scaled the height of humanity, and like the saints have no further to go. They are neither young nor old, neither ancient nor modern, and, like Piccarda in Dante’s *Paradise*, have attained the peace which knows no end, being itself the purpose of the world.

‘e la sua volontate è nostra pace.’

